BOOK NO.	ACCESSION
B St577	222877

Form 16 15M-9-28

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00369 7373

F

a.m. Wilhelmina Stirling

LIFE'S LITTLE DAY

SOME TALES AND OTHER REMINISCENCES

BY

A. M. W. STIRLING

*

AUT SCRIBENDA AGERE
AUT LEGENDA
SCRIBERE

*

THORNTON BUTTERWORTH LIMITED
15 BEDFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

First Published 1924

B
St 577
222877

3 1223 00369 7373

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

All rights reserved

TO

"PRETTY JANE"

THIS
"POT POURRI"
OF
MEMORIES

*

Dead roses! dead roses, and sunshine;
Dead summers of beauty and light;
And a dream of the time when those summers were young,
And the roses were crimson and white!

Away these wingéd years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep mark'd like all below
With chequer'd shades of joy and woe;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Mark'd cities lost, and empires changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fever'd the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Marmion (*Canto Four*).

Foreword

ALTHOUGH it is impossible to mention all their names individually, I wish cordially to thank the many friends who have allowed me to relate their experiences, canny and uncanny, in the following pages. I also wish to thank the Editor of the *Eastern Daily Press* for allowing me to quote from an article which I contributed to his paper.

My thanks are likewise due to Mrs. Mackail for allowing me to reproduce the tile by Sir Philip Burne-Jones; to Mrs. Arthur Mure for the loan of the miniature of the 3rd Earl of Egremont; to Miss Phillott for permission to reproduce her picture of "The Ghost"; to Mrs. Pickering for the reproduction of certain family portraits; and to the Marquis di Amodio for the picture of Lady Pickering by Janssens, now in his possession; also to Mrs. William Allingham for some of the caricatures by William De Morgan.

I wish further cordially to thank Mr. Lionel Bradgate and Mr. Erroll Sherson for their kind assistance with the proofs and index; and Mr. Charles Davis of the U.S.A. for his enlargement of the photograph of the De Morgans leaving Italy for the last time.

Contents

PART I

CHILDHOOD AND AFTER

CHAP.		PAGE
I	The Niche	13
II	The Occupant	28
III	Little Pitchers	51
IV	Cranford Redivivus	73
V	Cranford: The Household	88
VI	Bygone Yorkshire	96
VII	The World beyond the Avenue	120
VIII	Bygone Florence	143
IX	Autres Mœurs	163
X	Autres Mœurs (*continued*)	188

PART II

SECOND CHILDHOOD

XI	A Soliloquy	207
XII	Tales of the Pre-Raphaelites and Others	209
XIII	Tales of Relations and Others	238
XIV	Tales of Places	268
XV	Tales Canny and Uncanny	295
XVI	A Tale that is Told	334
XVII	Chrysanthemums and Bombs	359

List of Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
A. M. Wilhelmina Stirling . . . . . *Frontispiece*	
Mrs. Edward Rowland Pickering . . . . . *W. H. Phillips pinxit.*	20
A Family of Four: Evelyn, Spencer, Rowland and Wilhelmina Pickering	24
Spencer Umfreville Pickering . . . . . *Ch. Couzens and G. F. Watts pinxerunt.*	26
Christopher Pickering . . . . . *Cornelius Janssens pinxit.*	50
Anna Maria and Percival Andree Pickering	72
"Pretty Jane" . . . . . *From a drawing by Evelyn De Morgan.*	96
Mrs. Hudson of Tadworth Court	102
Frances and Maria Spencer-Stanhope, when old	118
George O'Brien Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont . . . . *From a miniature by Cosway.*	136
A. M. Wilhelmina Pickering (afterwards Stirling)	168
Caricature of William De Morgan, on a tile . . . . . *By Sir Philip Burne-Jones.*	212
The Hour Glass . . . . . *Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.*	216
The Soul's Prison House . . . . . *Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.*	232
Luna . . . . . *Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.*	236
The Rt. Reverend Bishop Stirling, D.D.	248
Lady Pickering . . . . . *Cornelius Janssens pinxit.* *From a picture in the possession of the Marquis di Amodio.*	284
The Ghost . . . . . *Constance Phillott pinxit.*	296
Evelyn De Morgan	336
The De Morgans leaving Italy for the last time, 1914 . . .	376

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

PAGE

Anne Vere (*née* Proctor), one of the two co-heiresses of Bennington Lordship, Herts (Great-grandmother of the Author) . . 27

"Waddy" 50

Percival Andree Pickering, *ætat* 12 72

Frances and Maria when young 87

Edward Hayes Pickering, eldest of the eleven children of Edward Rowland Pickering 95

The third Earl of Egremont 142

Sketch by the third Earl of Egremont 204

A. M. W. Pickering (afterwards Stirling) 206

A "flumbudge," by William De Morgan 208

Rêve d'une Veuve 228

Baronet in too large a hat 229

"Steak (stake) or chop?" 229

Charles Stirling, born 1827, *ob.* 1921 244

The Table Turner on the Nile 334

Facsimile picture letter from William De Morgan . . *facing p.* 230

PART I

CHILDHOOD AND AFTER

CHAPTER I

The Niche

I

ON the day when I came into this world my father wrote in his diary:

"My youngest daughter and fourth child born at ¼ to 4 a.m. *Quod felix faustumque sit.*"[1]

And wondering to-day how far his wish has been fulfilled, I understand that my life has been as other lives—spaces of sunlight and shadow: and an abiding conviction that though existence as a whole is never uninterruptedly happy, it is, at the worst, unfailingly interesting.

Yet I missed one of its greatest assets—a merry start on life's journey. Throughout my childhood I was a lonely little person, a distinct afterthought in the home circle. My sister, the eldest of the family, later Evelyn De Morgan, was so much older than myself that during those early days she lived in a world far apart; even between myself and my next brother there was a gap of some years which, at that age, made a gulf between us. I was like one born out of due season; and for that very reason—because my childhood was solitary and shadowed by both illness and sorrow—my memory was perhaps abnormally retentive. Moreover, as soon as I could hold a pen I wrote down most of my impressions, in doggerel or prose as the spirit moved me, but with a precociousness which belongs only to a child who is much alone, or much in the company of its elders.

Thus to-day I can resuscitate my exact outlook upon life at an age which to most of us has become as "the land where all things are forgotten." I can still enter with entire faithfulness into that queer anomaly—the odd, undeveloped brain of a little child, with its unaccountable fancies, its strange flashes of insight, and its entire lack of proportion—a distorted Wonderland where the little is big and the big little, and everything is seen in a crooked perspective.

I must, however, explain briefly the little niche in the world into which fate had thrust me.

My father came of an ancient family, which I gathered among my first impressions was contemporary with the Dodo and cleverly survived the Flood. Although the second son of a family of eleven,

[1] Which thing may it be happy and fortunate.

he, being a man of wit and worth, made an ample income at the Bar. My mother was the eldest daughter of John and Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, of Cannon Hall, and Horsforth, Yorkshire, the tale of whose lives I have previously written. In regard to my more remote forbears, I feel that I have dealt amply with them in former publications. To be of value, ancestors must be either inspiring or amusing; and since mine were essentially the latter, I shall now rest upon the polite dictum which the *Athenæum* once accorded me: "Mrs. Stirling is fortunate in her ancestors, and her ancestors, without undue flattery, are fortunate in Mrs. Stirling."

The central figure in one's first restricted outlook upon life, however, is necessarily the mother who dominates that tiny world of Home beyond which, for a space, we do not attempt to glance. Mine remains for me still in memory what she was in life—a being apart, a gentle, gracious presence, who took our plastic lives and moulded them with a strength and tenderness of which we were only aware when Time had widened our horizon. Besides her charm as an individual, she was in much a remarkable personality. Shy and unassertive to a degree curious in one who had mixed in the great world all her life, she had yet a peculiar dignity and fascination of manner; and while she possessed few superficial accomplishments, her education was profound and her pursuit of knowledge insatiable. Her father, a fine classical scholar, had early discovered in her his chosen companion, and imbued her with tastes which her natural talent had fostered. I have related elsewhere how she personally wrote for each of her children our early instructions in history and in science, and this with a fluency and a vividness amounting to genius, which gripped our imaginations as no published books ever had power to do.

My earliest recollection of her is dressed in a fashion which varied seldom—in black velvet with a jabot and ruffles of delicate lace. On ceremonious occasions, according to the then custom, she carried a handkerchief by its tiny centre of cambric, so that the filmy trimming which formed the rest of it hung down in gossamer folds. Yet it was a habit which she deprecated—"Making a parade of an infirmity!" she used to define it. She had a great tin box full of lovely specimens of old Brussels Rose-point, Honiton, Valenciennes and other lace, each wrapped and docketed in packets of fine blue paper; and on wet days she would often send for this box in order to study its contents, lingering lovingly over each exquisite design. "Lace is a work of art, and a joy to me," she would say. "My own mother gave me my choice, as the eldest daughter, which I preferred to have—her lace or her jewellery, and I chose the lace, because in those days there was a great fashion for artificial jewellery, but there was no artificial lace; and if you wore it at all every one knew it was real and a beautiful possession."

An even more vivid recollection of my mother, however, is with

her hair unbound and falling in luxuriant, waving tresses over her shoulders. Her great enjoyment was to have it brushed with two brushes, and her maid had special lessons to teach her how to do this to perfection, rapidly and lightly. When the girl got exhausted, a hairdresser would sometimes arrive to continue the process; and during it, as I grew older, my mother read aloud to me. In this fashion I first made acquaintance with Walter Scott's novels, Shakespeare's plays, Pope's Iliad and Odyssey, a wide range of books dealing with history, biography and fiction, also, when French was added to my knowledge, the plays of Racine and Molière. "I shall never forget reading the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* with you for the first time," my mother said to me once. "Till then I had no idea such a small mite had such a sense of humour, but you made yourself so ill with laughter and delight, that often I could not get on with the reading!"

My mother had the mannerisms of her class and day. To me they seemed an essential part of her dignity, her gentleness, her indefinable charm. I never saw her out of temper, only rarely, if she considered that anyone "presumed," there stole into her voice and air a certain aloofness which indicated that she was treating the offender, as she would have termed it, *de haut en bas*. She interlarded her talk with French phrases according to the then fashion. She spoke of a household being *bien-monté*, of so-and-so being dressed *à quatre épingles*, of some people being *bien nés*, of others not being quite *de niveau*; or, when she discovered herself in a nest of acquaintances, she remarked happily that she was quite *en pays de connaissance*. When anyone spoke of a "cucumber" I saw her cringe; she said it set her teeth on edge—the right way to pronounce it was, of course, "cowcumber." She told me, too, with a faint note of regret, how skimpy and undignified people appeared when crinolines first went out of fashion: "The ball-dresses were so pretty when I was a girl, floating masses of tulle with gay wreaths of flowers; afterwards people looked so badly dressed, so slovenly, like a collapsed balloon. Crinolines were so comfortable too; when I first tried to walk without one I got exhausted—my skirts wrapped round my legs and I felt as if they would throw me down."

And she told me the tradition respecting the large oval-shaped hoops such as my great-grandmother used to wear; how Marie Antoinette—when, alas! poor child, still but a merry creature of sixteen—was discovered playing leap-frog in the gardens of Versailles, and how her ladies and her courtiers, scandalized, held a secret conclave to decide what could be done effectually to preclude any recurrence of such a national disaster. So they devised the Great Hoop which forthwith became *de rigueur* at Court, and thus such a terrible spectacle as the future Queen of France indulging in leap-frog became an impossibility.

Often my mother's thoughts turned to her own girlhood, and she dwelt on the changes she had remarked since her day, just as we of to-day are beginning to note the changes since we, too, occupied the foreground of the stage.

"In my time," she told me, "there was none of the modern extravagance. We just had two ball-dresses of a stuff called tarlatan; a blue and a pink one, or a white, as the case might be, and with these two we went through an entire season. The maid recovered them with fresh tarlatan when required, and wreathed them with new flowers, so that they were always clean and pretty. It was considered very bad taste for girls to be over-dressed either in the number or the quality of their gowns; only the *nouveau riche* made any display. One of the best-dressed women I knew used to say that she never had more than three gowns—*scrub*, *tidrum* and *high-tidrum*. We had a very clever maid, a Swiss, whose father had been a glove manufacturer, and she made all our gloves. No bought gloves ever fitted like hers—they were literally like a skin and shaped to the arm with a gusset for the elbow. But your grandmamma used to say that no glove was ever worth wearing unless it took at least a quarter of an hour to get into it.

"In those days girls who lived in London must have had a very dreary time, for they could never go out without a man-servant, and I often wondered what the people did who had small incomes and large families, and could not afford carriages and men-servants for all their daughters! Most girls were condemned to sit at home a great deal. They did a lot of needlework for a *passetemps*, and there was a great fashion for cutting out pictures in silhouette in black paper. It took a lot of time and patience, and strained the eyesight, besides being entirely useless when it was done. But *our* lives were very different; we were in the country for nine months each year, and, with constant house-parties at home, besides visits to all the relations, and a gay season in London, we had a very lively existence.

"At balls one never danced twice with the same man—if he even asked one it was considered very marked. Of course a quadrille or the lancers took up a considerable time, and at their close my partner always took me back to my mother. Then if he said to me, 'Miss Stanhope, are you disengaged for the next dance?' I at once said I was afraid this was so. 'Then may I hope for the next after that?' 'I am afraid not!' But when he asked for two or three dances like this, it was obvious that he was very *épris*, and thinking of proposing!

"In London, society then was all on a very much smaller scale; there was a certain recognized clique who clung together, and we met the same people at every party. Nobody outside that set could ever get into it. There were three forms of entertainment—a rout, a concert, and a dance. Some friends who had one of the

large houses in the Regent's Park, with a garden, used to send out invitations for a 'breakfast' with the words 'Tea and Coffee' printed in the corner. It became a standard joke, and their two daughters, dark girls with sallow complexions, were known as 'Tea and Coffee' all over London.

"Everything in those days was more compact. One could drive out of London with a pair of horses in little over half an hour; and in regard to visiting, one had to keep the list very exactly. To return a visit the next day was vulgar; not to return it the second was rude.

"I remember, when we were girls, a book coming out called *Jane Eyre*.[1] There was a great deal of talk about it, and it was considered very improper. Your grandmamma read it out aloud to us, leaving out all the improper passages; but sometimes, to our delight, she got so interested in it that she forgot, and read straight on. . . .

"She was very particular, and when we were children the governess prepared Bibles for us with all the questionable passages pasted carefully over. But the result was that we at once got unexpurgated Bibles, and religiously hunted out all the paragraphs that had been erased!"

Other recollections from a long vanished day drift across my remembrance and seem indissolubly connected with my mother—tales to which I paid but scanty attention at the time of telling, but which come back to me now as clearly as though I heard her still relating them. And there are two more stories that I must have heard her relate to older listeners, which have about them a flavour of a later Victorian world.

After she married, my mother bought all her bonnets from a certain Mrs. Brown, who was a very important person. No bonnet was considered correct unless it came from Mrs. Brown; she supplied everybody who was anybody, and had made all Queen Victoria's millinery for years. But one day my mother ventured a little remonstrance. "Mrs. Brown," she said, "why don't you be a national benefactor and persuade the Queen to wear less hideous bonnets?" And the milliner threw up her hands in despair. "Oh, Madam, I *did* try. I ventured to modify the shapes ever so little and put a pretty bow at the side, and they were sent back to me with a crushing message—'Mrs. Brown evidently fails to understand that what her Majesty requires is a bonnet—*not a cap*!'"

The other tale which dwells in my recollection concerned a friend of my father's whom we will call Lord L. His peerage was of but recent creation. His ancestors—all honour to them—had served my ancestors well, albeit in a somewhat menial capacity;

[1] Published in 1848. My mother must have been nearly twenty-five at that date.

and Lord L., who had no *mauvais honte* about his origin, when dining with my father, loved to refer to the days before he became a great man, and made merry over the recollection. Not so Lady L. Although better born than her husband, she had all the snobbishness from which he was exempt, and although she could not avoid knowing my mother, she fled from us like the plague when escape was possible, and used invariably to send an excuse for her own absence when her husband came to dine with my father.

But one possession of my mother's filled her with an envy which she could not suppress. In the drawing-room at home were some beautiful tables made of light mottled amboyna-wood of uncommon design and ornamentation. For long Lady L. coveted these in silence ; but at length she devised a plan to gratify her desire without being under any obligation to my mother.

On a day when she knew that my mother would be safely out of the way at a garden-party at Marlborough House, Lady L. called and asked if she was at home. The answer being, as anticipated, in the negative, she inquired if she might go up to the drawing-room to write a note. The servants, knowing her by sight, agreed without demur ; whereupon she and a man who accompanied her went upstairs and remained for some time in the room with the door closed ; yet when she left no note could be found. Next time my mother called upon Lady L., however, she was astonished to find replicas of her tables in that lady's drawing-room, and she came to an obvious conclusion—the man who had accompanied Lady L. to our house on that unexplained visit was a designer who had carefully measured and taken exact details of the coveted articles of furniture in order to have them copied. "It was curious behaviour," my mother commented with gentle wonder, "for Lady L. was really quite *bien née* ! "

But my father and mother were so entirely happy in their home life they could afford to laugh at the vagaries of the world around them. From the time of their marriage they hated society and refused all visits ; but they did not ignore any who came under the sacred category of "The Family," and they paid off their social debts in a series of excellent dinner-parties—long and expensive, as was the fashion of the day. For thirty years my mother had a wonderful cook, Mrs. Waddup (of whom more anon), who despite the fact that she was a recognized *cordon bleu* and that my mother criticized every sauce and every gravy as a work of art, yet thought herself fortunate to receive twenty-five pounds a year, nor dreamed of asking for more. Meanwhile the happiest days spent by my parents were those they passed alone together ; they shared every book, every thought in common ; and every wish, every whim of my mother's was gratified by the husband who, to the last day of his life, loved her with an unselfish devotion which I have seldom seen equalled and never surpassed.

II

Although I was very young when my father died, I remember him with distinctness. I recall how his hair, prematurely white, clustered in silver locks above a fine brow and handsome face ; and I understood, too, that he had a keen sense of fun and a witty tongue. But one curious habit of his made a yet greater impression upon me as a child. When lost in thought, he would absently mutter to himself, " Dogs ! dogs ! dogs ! " The exclamation was quite unconscious and peculiarly meaningless, as he had an aversion to both dogs and cats. It also led to complications, as a Socialist speaker in the park once took it to be a personal criticism, and my father, entirely unaware of having made any remark, could not understand the sudden fury of the insulted orator, who rounded on him with a torrent of vituperation.

One day I was trotting along the street with my hand in his, when I heard him give vent to this exclamation. An errand-boy, struck by the oddity of the speech, promptly yelled in a shrill nasal treble, " Cats ! cats ! cats ! " My father, startled out of his reverie, burst out laughing. Then he dived into his pocket for a shilling and tossed it to the culprit. " You will go to the dogs quick enough, young man," he said, " if you make game of your elders ! "

On yet another occasion his canine antipathies got him into trouble. A lady passed us exercising an enormously fat, squat dog, and the animal, puffing with heat, got under my father's feet. " Get along, Waddelums ! " he exclaimed in irritation, and the lady turned upon him wrathfully. " Waddelums yourself ! " she retorted disdainfully ; and my father, making a profound bow, walked on, chuckling delightedly, to retail the story against himself.

As I have mentioned, my father was one of a large family, originally consisting of nine sons and two daughters. I have found some letters from my grandmother at the time of my mother's engagement in which she says : " Mr. Pickering has many brothers, but only one surviving sister, who is an invalid and cannot last long." That invalid survived every member of her family, and died half a century afterwards when within a few weeks of attaining her hundredth birthday. The last time I saw her she was a handsome old lady with a fine intellectual cast of countenance, and to talk to her was like being in the presence of an inquisitor—so minutely did she cross-question one about anything she desired to know, and so shrewd was she to detect any evasion in the answers she elicited. At that date she still read *The Times* from end to end daily, and discoursed eloquently on the political situation. Likewise she ate pastry and lobster when so minded, and digested both with a happy facility. She had then been in bed, an incurable invalid, for over thirty years, and she was ostensibly unable to walk ; yet at night, when all was still, her daughter used to hear her moving about her

room with a firm, unhesitating tread which seemed incredible to, and was tactfully ignored by, all who had to tend her. Her son, Mr. Percy Vere Turner, who held a Government appointment in the Post Office, used to stay with us so often that I named him the "Persevere re-turner."

Two other *dramatis personæ* may be mentioned who were then on the small stage of life where I found myself. These were my two grandmothers, of whom my personal recollection is almost non-existent, but is fanned by tales gleaned from others.

My father's mother, Mrs. Pickering, a most lovely old lady, used to drive to see us either from her country house at Clapham or her town house in Prince's Gate, in a ponderous yellow coach with servants in blue plush breeches and canary waistcoats. She was very generous and very extravagant, and I have a dim recollection that on the top of her coach was always a portmanteau whence presents were produced. What she gave to one grandchild, however, she gave impartially to all, the size only varying according to the age of the recipient. Thus each of her descendants to-day is possessed of the same kind of square black clock which on one occasion she elected to present all round. It would appear as though she must have ordered these in by the gross.

My other grandmother, Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, was built on a different mould, and was what my mother described as *tres bien elevée* and an *esprit fort.* She was clever and an eloquent orator at a date when it was rare for women to speak in public—it was she, and not my grandfather, who spoke at all the tenants' dinners or public entertainments at their home in Yorkshire. She was, moreover, a martinet, and had very decided views on what was fitting for "inferiors." I have a letter from her written, when a prospective bride, to my grandfather, in which she refers to her future household. "I shall put down with an iron hand all curl-papers and fal-lals!" she says. And in connection with this I have heard a tale.

I had a very pretty nurse called Jane, and one Sunday, when I had not been very long in this world, I was sent round in her charge to see this grandmother, who was then at her London house in Harley Street. Now Jane, besides being striking in appearance, with golden hair and a lovely complexion, was that day wearing a dress with which she was extremely pleased. It had been given to her by my other grandmother, Mrs. Pickering, and consisted of snow-white muslin patterned in tiny spots and blue convolvuluses. With this she wore a white cross-over fichu, and a trim white bonnet edged with blue and tied with yellow strings.

Although the costume sounds gaudy, it was plainly made and very neat, but the butler, when he opened the door, looked at her askance. "Her ladyship will want to see you," he said reflectively, "and *then* you'll hear something!"

[*W. H. Phillips pinxit.*

MRS. EDWARD ROWLAND PICKERING (*née* Mary Vere).

(*Grandmother of the Author.*)

"Why should her ladyship want to see me?" inquired Jane innocently; but later the bell rang, and she was told to go upstairs. When she entered the room, my grandmother eyed her up and down with amazement.

"Did Mrs. Pickering see you before you came out?" she demanded at last.

"Yes, me lady."

"And she allowed you to be seen in the street with her daughter and my granddaughter like that?"

"Yes, me lady," said Jane, much annoyed. "It was Mr. Pickering's mother gave me this dress herself."

My grandmother was nonplussed, she could not openly denounce the taste of my other grandmother; but at that moment she heard a faint rustle and a stealthy step passing the door. "Bateman! Bateman!" she called instantly.

Bateman was her elderly maid, who had been endeavouring to slip out unseen, and who now came in guiltily. She was dressed for her "afternoon out" in a black dress with a small black bonnet; but the dress was silk and had flounces, and the bonnet sported a white feather. And when my grandmother saw this she flung up her hands. "My God!" she exclaimed tragically, "my own maid aping her betters! What *is* the world coming to?" Bateman retreated upstairs; but she had no longer any heart to go out; she shut herself into her room for the rest of the afternoon, weeping bitterly at her folly in having ventured to ape her betters. Meantime Jane slipped softly away; and, by and by, regaled my mother with her version of the episode—highly coloured, no doubt, and Jane was a bit of a malaprop. "When her ladyship drew public attraction [*sic*] to my dress," she declared dramatically, "I was just putrified!"

Even when my grandmother's sight was failing from age, I have heard that when any "inferiors" came into her presence she would sidle up to them and surreptitiously take between her finger and thumb a small fold of their clothes in order to ascertain the texture. For it remained an unalterable part of her creed that the lower classes should be clad in homespun, and that silk, by a special dispensation of Providence, was reserved for her own grade in the social scale. Yet, even so, the day came when she too, with the recognition that the world was passing, renounced this privilege of Caste. One day she sent for Bateman. "Take away," she commanded, "all my fine gowns and do with them what you like so long as you don't wear them yourself. I shall visit no more, and I shall never require a silk dress." It was her last valediction to Pomp and Circumstance. Thenceforward in simple repps and bombasin she awaited the coming of Death.

One other relation lived in Harley Street, which in those days was a fashionable centre and had not yet been invaded by the

medical profession. This was my great-uncle, General Spencer-Stanhope, known in the family as "The General." A typical Guardsman of the old school, he was immaculate in appearance, irreproachable in conduct, pompous in manner. He always addressed me as "little 'ouman" and asked me if I liked living in "Lunnon." He was a man with the most amazing number of friends. Three-quarters of the year he spent paying visits, and one-quarter he passed in town, where he dined out every night of the week and gave a family dinner-party every Sunday. His formal drawing-room was a sight, with the mass of china and glass which it contained, and one walked across it with a sense of disaster imminent in every step. His servants had all been with him for half a century. He kept a carriage as a form of charity, and used to send his coachman round every morning in turn to any impecunious ladies of his acquaintance to take their orders for its use. He gave largely to benevolent institutions besides, and was one of the kindest-hearted men; yet he once had a terrible experience in this connection, the memory of which always haunted him.

One night as he was going out to dinner a woman seated on his doorstep begged from him. "I am starving!" she said. "In God's name give me some money!" The General hated refusing anybody, but he had often been taken in by impostors, and he felt that a principle was at stake. "You must go away!" he said firmly. "I cannot give indiscriminately to beggars." "If you don't help me, I shall be dead when you come back!" urged the woman; but the General reluctantly passed to his carriage and drove away. After an excellent dinner, he came home to find the woman still upon his step. But she was huddled up in a dark corner, and when he spoke to her she did not answer. She was dead, and it was ultimately proved that she had died of acute starvation.

The General had been one of a family of fifteen, and for many years during the season his two youngest and only surviving sisters came to spend part of the summer with him; but of them I shall have occasion to speak later. I must revert to my more immediate home circle.

III

We four children each first saw daylight in London at No. 6, Upper Grosvenor Street. Different in temperament as we afterwards became, I think we shared certain marked characteristics in common. We each had the same tireless energy of brain and body; a passion for work, a hunger for knowledge—an insatiable craving, as I early expressed it, to be "doing and knowing." "If I cannot be anything else when I grow up, I'll sweep a crossing—I will *do*!" I am told I announced as a small child, so that I became known by the nickname of Doey. Moreover, in a ridiculously short space

after we had opened our eyes in this world, we had each decided what was to be our individual aim for the future.

My sister began painting as soon as she could hold a brush; my eldest brother, Spencer, turned his attention to scientific research and nearly ended his days and ours by dangerous experiments in chemicals. My second brother, Rowland, destined by my parents for the Navy, determined to enter the medical profession, in spite of strong opposition, for those were days when to be a professional slayer of a visible enemy was an honourable calling, but to be a professional combatant of more insidious foes—of germs and microbes—was not the occupation of a gentleman. From the first moment when I could swallow, not only did he assiduously dose me with bread pills, but at fourteen he published a pamphlet on *Poisons and their Antidotes*, and he wrote a bulky treatise entitled *A Synopsis of Various Medicines, together with the Times and Modes of Administering Them.* Only delicate health eventually turned him from his project. As for myself, having no particular talent, I fell back upon the only course open to me. But to-day I cannot describe my home circle better than I summed it up at a very youthful age in the following doggerel, which I only present to any captious eye with profound apologies.

MY FAMILY

I'm one of a small family,
A family of four;
But I am sure that's quite enuff,
And we don't want any more.

I

The eldest is an artist,
And she paints some queer things too;
Sometimes a naked kupid,
With arrows bright and new.

At other times a Venus
With a flowing mane of red,
With cheeks as bright as cherries
—Eyes starting from her head.

Sometimes she paints an angel
With wings as bright as gold;
At other times a demon
With wings as black as mould.

And all these queer devices
She imagines in her brain;
So after this I fear that
You'll think she's quite insane.

In height she isn't very tall,
She's also very thin.
Her hair is all one mass of fluff,
You ne'er saw such a thing!

She's rather fond of teasing,
But has really a kind heart.
And she isn't a bad creature
If she wasn't—so "High-Art!"

II

The second's a young fellow
With a head of curley hair;
A nose as strate as Grosvenor Gate,
And of eyes a small blue pair.

This young man goes in for Science,
Of bottles he's very long rows,
And the dreadful stuff he studies,
Thank goodness—no one knows!

He likes the rule 'tis better
Hardly ever to speak a word,
So he keeps his wisdom to himself
And his voice is seldom heard.

They *say* he's learned—and I'm sure
He seems to think a lot;
But if it makes one so demure
I'm very glad I'm not.

III

The third is a tall, lanky child
With a lot of thick black hair;
He is very obliging indeed,
—Possessed of good-nature rare. . . .

He intends to be a doctor
And to dose us all with pills,
To pass his life most pleasantly
In curing all our ills.

He'll spend his time in looking
At various coloured tongues,
In feeling many pulses
Ex'am'ning many lungs.

An enviabul existence!
I wish him joy of it!
Ah—Mr. Pill-box you will find
For that life you're not fit. . . .

IV

Now last—not least—there comes to view
The Gem of all this Family,
The youthful orthoress appears
Thoughtful and medditive, you see.

The Artist—the Fillosofer,
The Doctor—in the background stand.
For now the orthoress appears
A pen and pencil in her hand!

Evelyn Pickering,
ætat 10.

Spencer Pickering,
ætat 7.

Rowland Pickering,
ætat 8.

Wilhelmina Pickering,
ætat 4.

A Family of Four.

Her's is the fame which still may live
When she has long been dead,
Her works by all posteritty
May honoured be—and *read.*

And when the others lie forgot
And in the mould do rest,
Yet still her name may twinkle on
The brightest and the best!

I do not know precisely how old I was when I wrote this facetious composition, but the writing is little past the pot-hook period, and I cannot have been eight, for before my eldest brother was sixteen he blew one of his eyes out in a scientific experiment, and had no longer "a small blue pair." The verses, being somewhat provocative, drew from my other brother, Rowland, a retort which may be considered witty in view of the fact that he cannot, at the outside, have been more than a small boy of twelve years old when he wrote it.

TO THE SELF-STILED AUTHORESS

Until your sad writing and spelling improve
It is hard to make out if your grammar is good.
While this is so, 'twill be impossible, I guess,
For any of your works to be a success;
And as to the Fame which you say cannot die,
Let it *live* first, and then we may try!
'Tis a true saying in my estimation
That Self-praise is no recommendation;
'Twould be far better to be silent, I guess,
Until your works shall have passed through the Press;
They will speak for themselves, if this comes to pass,
In testing "The Gem" we may find it—stained glass!

I retaliated by referring to his own autograph—he wrote a microscopic hand—and pointing out what the effect of this indecipherable script might be on his imaginary patients:

As you'll send not a few, all through that small writing,
To moulder in clay with the worms all a-biting!

I probably got the worst of the argument, however, for Rowland was a sharp-witted little fellow, whose remarks were all the funnier because of his imperturbably solemn way of enunciating them. I once heard my mother tell the following about him, in connection with which it must first be explained that my father always called her Mina, as an abbreviation of Wilhelmina. Rowland at the time was a small boy in petticoats, when one day, seated on the floor with his starched skirts sticking straight out round him, his gaze became fixed on my mother with such an unflinching stare that at last beneath that persistent scrutiny she stirred uneasily. "Little man," she said, "what are you looking at? You must not stare so!" And the mite on the hearthrug chanted imperturbably:

" A cat may look at a King
And I may look at a *Mina* thing ! "

Of my elder brother one tale filtered down to me. A most imposing presence in those early days was the head nurse Loutitt, a tall, very dignified Scottish body, who, when I was little more than a baby, left to fulfil that ambition of her class—to marry a man of " independent means." For some inexplicable reason we children called this magnificent person Toe, and my chief recollection of her is centred upon the assiduity with which she insisted that her underlings should clothe us in clean garments of every possible description at the very last moment before starting on a journey, *" in case there should be a railway accident."*

Now Spencer, in his babyhood, with the beauty of a cherub combined the temper of a fiend, and when he fell into a paroxysm of rage, the fear of neither God nor man could be whipped into him. One day at the seaside, having been thwarted in some wish, he started screaming and rent the air with such piercing shrieks that Toe, her dignity sorely tried, seized him hurriedly and set off home. *En route*, however, her progress was intercepted by two pretty ladies who tactlessly sided with the irate infant. " Oh, what a perfect little *Angel* ! " cried one. " What *can* be the matter with the darling little thing ? "

" Temper, Ma'am ! " responded Toe grimly. " And if it's an ' Angel ' it's a black one ! " And she stalked off.

Later she was told that the two ladies who had spoken to her were two of Queen Victoria's daughters.

" Then it's a pity they haven't the sense of their Mamma ! " was Toe's impressive comment. Yet those were days when all Royalty was regarded as semi-divine, and thrones were not falling like autumn leaves.

By and by, when I, the afterthought, reigned in the deserted nursery, peace had fallen. Looking back at that small former self, it seems to me that I was a serious, over-anxious little child, well intentioned, but nervous and hypersensitive. Unlike the pickles who had preceded me (and of whom I have given some account in *William De Morgan and his Wife*), I had no one in my early days to act as an incentive to, or abettor in, pranks ; and the spice of the devil which was latent in me trickled out solely through my pen.

My brothers I saw only when they came home for their holidays. The younger I regarded with an adoring awe ; but of the elder, then a handsome, morose youth, I was frankly terrified. He had a vein of cruelty in his teasing from which I shrank ; and my sister, too, as one of that race apart, " the grown-ups," was to me an alarming personality. " What is Evelyn like ? " a small girl once asked me, inviting confidence. " Like a thunderstorm," I replied with precise truthfulness. To me she seemed as brilliant, restless and withal frightening. . . . I could not have framed any exact

[*Ch. Couzens and G. F. Watts, R.A., pinxerunt.*

SPENCER UMFREVILLE PICKERING.

reason for the impression, but I felt dimly that at times she disturbed the Victorian placidity of our home like a flash from an alien world. One trivial illustration will suffice to all who, like myself, can still reconjure up the atmosphere of those not far-distant days when, to a certain section in society, to be an amateur in all things was admissible, but to be professional or proficient in any one was anathema.

My mother had been out driving with a cousin, Lady Anne P., who had unusual artistic talent, and subsequently she observed sympathetically and with a note of genuine melancholy:

"I felt *so* sorry for poor Anne to-day. . . . She was telling me how bitterly she felt her wasted gifts. She said, 'If only I had been born in a different sphere—only been forced to work for my living, I feel what might I not have accomplished with my life!'"

And my sister looked up with an angry gleam in her eyes. "People who talk like that are born nincompoops or snobs!" she said bluntly.

To-day that would be pointing the obvious; then, it was startling in its modernity.

And one day my mother had another surprise. Coal-carts appeared in London with Lord Londonderry's name upon them, and the first time she saw them she laughed merrily at such a preposterous innovation; but, by and by, she looked serious. "It is the thin end of the wedge!" she said enigmatically. I think she felt that a social revolution was upon us.

Anne Vere (née Proctor), one of the two co-heiresses of Bennington Lordship, Herts.
(Great-grandmother of the Author)

CHAPTER II

The Occupant

I

SUCH, in brief, was the small stage on which I found myself; I will now turn to the more personal outlook of the small actor.

Every one trying to probe into the dim recesses of the past is struck by the same recognition—that it is the trivialities of existence which remain photographed sharply upon the memory, while the more important events have faded into nothingness. For some inexplicable reason, through all one's after-life, certain incidents stand out indelibly from their surroundings, with the vividness of pictures—incidents which, at the time of their happening, appeared little calculated to make any lasting impression. It may have been just a day when the sun shone and our hearts were light; a sunset whose crimson glory seemed to bring Heaven temporarily to Earth; a jest over which we laughed; a remark which wounded us. Thousands of other sunny days, of jests, or griefs, have passed over us and made no abiding impression—one has only to pick up an old diary to understand how completely, but for the written word, that past has been blotted out—yet just those few absurdities remain, erratically, senselessly permanent.

One of these recollections in my case is so prosaic that I hesitate to transcribe it; yet it has always interested me, partly because of the extraordinary distinctness with which it has remained with me, and partly because of its curious implication that an undeveloped brain can criticize before it can formulate any impressions in speech. Here is the incident in all its crudity.

I am a stolid baby seated in a perambulator. What age I am I cannot say, but I am quite certain that I cannot talk. Yet I am thinking, consecutively, furiously; and the incident which is branding itself upon my brain and enraging me beyond all power of relief in tears or shrieks is this—a nurse is holding my nose tightly between her finger and thumb inside a pocket-handkerchief while she murmurs insinuatingly; "*Blow, baby! Blow!*" And as I look at her I am thinking: "You great, ungainly, silly grown-up Thing, you! How can any baby blow when you are pinching its nose so hard that it cannot even breathe? Loosen your hold, you silly big Thing, and this baby *may* blow!" And to-day when I see some large-eyed, solemn infant fixing me with an uncompromising

stare, I find myself wondering nervously whether it is appraising me as I then appraised my elders, and summing me up, in silent cynicism, as a consummate fool!

This infantile impression has since received confirmation from a recollection of Dr. R. Gordon Latham, author of the *Dictionary of the English Language*. He told my father-in-law that he distinctly remembered the time before he could speak, and how, when he was ill-treated by his nurse, he made up his mind that when he *could* speak he would tell his parents about this!

A later recollection which has stayed with me is that of a journey down to Ramsgate with my nurse one Easter. In the carriage with us were a lady and gentleman whose maid and valet travelled apart, but the latter came to the door at intervals and addressed the gentleman as "Sir John." I got extremely bored with sitting still, so at last I trotted over to the gentleman with the introductory remark: "Sir John, may I show you my doll?" He was a great solemn-looking being, and he glared at me over his glasses as though I was some curious insect. Then his face relaxed, and we were soon deep in an animated conversation.

"Shall I show you how Marwood hangs people?" he suggested. "I have sent several people to be hanged!"

"John! John—how *can* you?" remonstrated the lady.

But, making a noose with his handkerchief, he took my doll and toppled it off the window-ledge, so that it dangled by its neck, while I watched with heartless interest. It was a curious entertainment to provide for a scrap of humanity such as I was then. Next he quoted what I believe was a stock-joke of the period: "If Pa killed Ma, who would kill Pa?—*Ma-would*" (Marwood).

By and by I heard him say to the lady: "She's quite the sharpest little thing I've ever struck!" I had been warned that knives were sharp, and I thought he meant something objectionable; but we parted good friends, his final remark to me being: "You won't forget how Marwood hangs people!" I subsequently wrote another recollection of my new acquaintance in a letter which came back to my possession after my father's death. (Perhaps I should explain that the words in it italicized were intentionally facetious.)

(*be*) *Good Friday.*

DEAR PAPA,—

We got here quite safe. I have been for a donkey-ride, and the donkey sat down in the see and would not git up. It musta ben very tired, poor animile.

I am *very* happy here; though as you may be sure, I miss you and Mamma very much. It is very stormy and the wind blows as if it was going to nock everything down before it; (but I like that very much as it adds to my fun and is *very rawfleshing*).

We had a very pleasant journey when we were coming here, there was a very nice gentleman and also a lady in the train. The gentleman tort me this (I do not know if you have heard it before):

> My daughters praise our curate's eyes,
> *I* cannot see their light divine,
> His eyes he closes when he prays,
> And when he preaches—closes mine!

I am gitting such nice roses here in this lovely wind.

YOUR LITTLE PET.

A third recollection which drifts erratically out of that misty past is as follows:

I am lying in my crib in the night-nursery—it is a thing like a box with high sides so that I cannot fall out, and it is painted bright yellow. Through the open door I can see into the day-nursery, where the three nurses are talking round the supper-table. . . . When I shut my eyes I can still see the scene and hear the voices. . . .

It is the head nurse, Loutitt, who is speaking first, and when she speaks the two others listen with respectful attention. Her voice, so long since stilled, comes to me with curious distinctness across the years, relating anecdotes of her life. Here is one:

"The gentleman I lived with before I came here was a Mr. Mackintosh, and he had a son, Master Tom, who *was* a caution—there was nothing that young scamp wasn't up to. And Mr. Mackintosh's housekeeper died, and Mr. Mackintosh put up a tombstone to her, with the words that the old lady had requested:

> "As I am now, so you must be,
> Prepare yourself to follow me.

"And the next time Mr. Mackintosh went through the churchyard he found Master Tom had been along and scratched another verse under it:

> "To follow you I'm not content
> Until I know which way you went."

"Clever—wasn't it?" comments pretty Jane admiringly; and as she takes up the discourse, drowsily I gather small items of gossip respecting her people—how her mother, when a girl, used actually to give half a guinea a yard for cotton, and it took two and a half yards to make a gown; how her grandmother used to go out hunting in a pea-green riding-habit and a big green hat with cock's feathers; and how she and her sisters (although farmer's daughters) were never allowed to sit down in their mother's presence or to enter the best parlour except on Sundays—"only one sister who was delicate and had Privileges according."

I am indulging in a sleepy vision of a row of pea-green ladies

standing in the presence of an elderly female of dragon-like aspect, when I am stirred into wakefulness by a fresh development. For now Jane is telling a tale of horror, and I sit up and listen for all I am worth. This is the gist of it.

A few years earlier, when Jane was a girl living on the borders of Lincolnshire, she had always heard say that the vicarage at Newton, in Cambridgeshire, was haunted. During certain seasons of the year Dr. Currie, of Jesus College, Cambridge, used to take the duty there, and at these times he occupied the rectory, but for the rest of the year the place was shut up, as the curate in charge lived in another house. Dr. Currie himself said that never while he had been at the rectory had anything unaccountable come under his notice ; and when he went away he put in a charming old couple as caretakers, who were well known to Jane, by name Mr. and Mrs. Edwards.

They were simple, God-fearing folk, who used to mock happily at the idea of ghosts. " Nothing could happen to us with God protecting us," they used to say when people questioned them ; " we might be afraid of wicked men, but creatures from another world would not be allowed to harm us." Moreover, although the house stood away from the village in rather a lonely spot, there was a big alarm-bell by which assistance could be summoned, so they did not feel cut off from humanity.

Occasionally, it is true, odd things occurred, though nothing of any moment. One day, for instance, after the departure of the rector, Mrs. Edwards to her surprise found the cellar door wide open. She walked to the door and peered into the gloomy precincts beyond, when a curious sensation came over her and she felt as though someone were warning her, " *Don't go in—if you do, you will be shut in* ! " Laughing at her own folly, she went in search of the gardener and told him what she had discovered. " Only fancy," she said, " Mr. Thomas (the butler) has gone off and left the cellar door wide open ! " " Maybe we'll find the key in it ! " was the rejoinder, and the man came with her to look. To their amazement they found the door tightly locked and no signs of a key anywhere. The butler afterwards stated that he had locked it before leaving, and the only key was in his possession ; he refused to believe the story till Mrs. Edwards described accurately to him the interior of the wine-vaults and the exact position of certain things in the cellar which to his knowledge he had never opened when she was in the house, whereat he was " fairly struck all of a heap," said Jane.

Some time after this, the old couple were, as usual, alone in the house at night, when they heard the tramping of feet and a sound of people moving about down below. They rushed to the door of their room and locked it, then listened in growing alarm. It was evident to them that some men had broken into the place, and,

soon, that the intruders must be literally ransacking it . . . for the noise increased . . . furniture was being moved, fire-irons being banged about, crockery smashed, till the noise became a perfect pandemonium. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, terror-stricken, barricaded the door of their room—dragging every available bit of furniture across the floor ; next they rushed to the alarm-bell and began pealing it violently to summon help from the village. But, to their dismay, the rope broke, and all they could do was to scream for assistance in the vain hope that someone might hear them.

Unfortunately, as they learnt afterwards, several men who had dressed and were ready to come to their assistance, on the cessation of the bell concluded that all was well and went back to bed ; so no one came to the terrified couple. Through the long hours of that awful night the row continued till it seemed as though by morning nothing could be left unsmashed in the place. Only when day dawned did the terrible noise subside, but by then the poor old people were in a state of complete collapse.

" Mrs. Edwards' throat was swollen just level with her chin, and she was black in the face from screaming," said Jane, dropping her voice with an impressive note of awe ; " and when they found her they thought she was dying. They sent for the doctor quick, and even *he* did not know if she'd get over it. And she never was the same woman and died soon after. And the odd thing of it all was that when they came to go over the house, everything was found to be in order, in its exact place. Nothing had been moved, nothing stolen, nothing smashed. All that noise went for nothing, so to speak. And it seems that it was this same sort of rumpus happening at intervals which had given the house its bad name. But Nothing was ever *seen*.

" I saw Mrs. Edwards afterwards," concluded Jane, " and the sad thing was she said if they'd known it was ghosts, as you may say, they wouldn't have minded, as they felt the Almighty could deal with such-like. But they thought it was burglars come to cut their throats."

The names in the story and many of the details had gone from me till I verified and re-vivified the tale recently ; but what did impress me unforgettably as a child, cowering beneath the bed-clothes, was the fact of Mrs. Edwards' throat being swollen level with her chin. I listened with but divided attention to tales of the Death-Watch which were next recounted round the supper-table, I was so busy with the problem before me. Supposing this dreadful thing happened to me ? Supposing I was so frightened that I screamed till I was black in the face and my throat swelled like Mrs. Edwards' ? *And how many screams did it take to do it ?*

Then, some time afterwards, the Dreadful Thing nearly came to pass.

I was staying at the " Lord Warden " at Dover with my mother,

and had gone placidly to sleep one evening, so that Jane, without an afterthought, left me to get her supper. But by and by I awoke to find myself alone, and to understand that what had roused me was a steady tapping sound for which I could not account. I was unaware that a gutter outside my room was discharging water at intervals upon a kitchen skylight below; and the steady drip at regular intervals sounded to me like the ticking of a ghostly clock—*The Death-Watch*. The more I listened to it, the more intolerable it became, and suddenly I remembered Mrs. Edwards. . . . Supposing, when Jane returned, she found me black in the face and my throat level with my chin. . . . Such a contingency was not to be faced. I sprang out of bed and determined, as the least of two evils, to seek for her in the frightening vastness of the hotel.

I have explained that I was a conscientious child, and terrified as I was, I remembered past instructions not to catch cold. There was sufficient light filtering from a glass top in the door for me to distinguish objects dimly, and with trembling fingers I hurriedly seized all the bath-towels in my room and the next, then by means of a portmanteau strap and some stockings knotted together I tied these over my nightgown. It was an extremely stuffy night in August, nevertheless in my anxiety to do right and escape Nemesis I further held a pillow tightly clasped over my back, and thus equipped, I started on my quest down the lighted corridor. I had not gone far before I encountered an old gentleman who alarmed me considerably by standing stock-still and staring in amazement at what was surely the queerest little figure he had ever seen. But I sped on, and, by a lucky chance, a few moments later I encountered Jane herself returning to her room.

"Good Heavens, child!" she exclaimed, "whatever are you doing wandering about the passages like a Guy Fox [sic] with all these wet towels about you—*you'll catch your death of cold*!" Long after she told me that she should never forget the sight of the strange little object, shapeless with wraps, scurrying along with a scared white face and visibly trembling limbs. But to me, as I was ignominiously hustled back to bed, there was present only a bitter sense of the unaccountableness of grown-ups. All my efforts to do right, to escape cold, to avoid the fate of Mrs. Edwards, counted for nothing beside that one silly fact—the bath-towels were wet!

On a somewhat similar occasion I acted differently. I had been left alone in the nursery in Upper Grosvenor Street again during that awful time when Jane went down to fetch her supper, and she lingered unduly in the more congenial atmosphere of the kitchen. I had heard some talk of a burglary which had recently occurred, and as I sat there in solitude, I became fascinated by the appearance of the long baize curtains over the windows. They hung in thick folds, and I was certain that one fold bulged out farther than the rest—also that from time to time it stirred . . . and gradually

the suspicion became a conviction that behind that fold there was a burglar or possibly a bear—it did not much matter which—about to pounce out upon me and slay me. So I did what exemplary little girls in story-books did, I fell on my knees and prayed to be protected. But even so my prayer was a pre-eminently practical one. Possibly the story of Hezekiah was in my mind, but I felt that if the date had arrived at which it had been pre-arranged I was to die, it was necessary, in order to divert the Almighty from his unpleasant scheme, to propose some sort of a compromise. So I begged to be allowed to live till I was eight years old. I remember thinking that date was such a long way off, and represented such an advanced age, that I felt convinced by the time I arrived at it that I should be entirely willing to depart.

My prayer was granted in that neither the burglar nor the bear put in an appearance ; but from that time I knew privately that I was only going to live to be eight. Other considerations, however, occupied my attention somewhat fully in the interval.

II

Daily I was sent for to my mother's flower-laden boudoir, where, as a delightful secret, she was teaching me to read. I pored over a small red leather book which had once belonged to my great-grandmother and from which three generations had successively learnt ; and the very first sentence which I laboriously pieced together amid happy laughter was *" Charles, what a clever thing it is to read ! "* Thus the first word I ever deciphered was the name of my future husband. Other memories, however, are less attractive.

In these days of psycho-analysis attention is devoted to the fancies and even to the dreams of children which was never accorded to them before, while the ills which we suffer in after-life are confidently thus attributed to many an unsuspected source. Undoubtedly a tendency to certain dreams is a matter of inheritance and runs in families. For instance I discovered that my cousins the Stanhopes, and their cousins the Bulwers were all much troubled as children by a peculiar nightmare in which it seemed to them that one hand or one limb was enlarging to enormous proportions, while the rest of the body remained normal. Sometimes even one finger grew and grew till it filled all the room. . . . I never suffered from this particular obsession ; my especial horror was a certain Bogie who laid traps for me, and who haunted all my childhood.

The experience was curious, for I dreamed the same dream in a different setting for years. The central idea never varied, only the manner of its presentment. Always I entered some place, smiling and happy, to find that the entrance had closed up behind me and that exit was impossible. Always I knew then that I had been

caught in the same old trap by the cunning of the same old Demon ; and the horror of the realization was unspeakable. But the last time I ever suffered from that nightmare a strange thing happened.

I fancied that I was at Ramsgate, and with my bucket and pail I set off happily to go down a breakwater to the sands. But the instant I had started I discovered that what I had believed to be a breakwater was in reality a closed-in place, all in darkness, and as I turned in fright to retrace my steps I found, as usual, that the entrance was gone and I had been trapped. The place where I stood was a narrow ledge and on either side of me, in impenetrable blackness, there stretched a fathomless abyss. I stood there quaking, unable to move hand or foot lest I should be precipitated into the grim, haunted depths, and the terror which obsessed me no pen can describe.

Then, as I fearfully awaited further developments, in the darkness below a crimson gleam appeared—probably Hell-fires—and, by and by, out of it uprose the Bogie himself. He was a conventional Bogie with horns, hoofs and a tail, also a hide like a rhinoceros ; but to my surprise he had a genial smile, and he shook hands with the most perfect politeness. " You see I am not a bad Bogie after all ! " he assured me apologetically ; " *You* are really more of an imp than I am ! " Thereupon, I laughed heartily with an immense relief, and we actually had a romp together ; after which, presumably because my fear had been destroyed, I never dreamt of that Demon again !

But apart from the terror that " walketh in darkness " there were fantasies as awe-inspiring by day. It is said that we come into existence trailing clouds of glory from afar, but we also bring with us a dread of the Unknown or Unknowable which in childhood takes the form of fantastic horrors. Two things I knew convincingly in those days—one, that if I did not bow to the drawing-room door every time I passed it a bear would rush out and hug me ; the other, that if ever I stretched my legs out straight in bed my warm toes would come in repulsive contact with the icy, slimy scales of a big, cold snake which lay coiled up there. So, night after night, I remained rolled up tightly like a ball, never daring to extend my stiff, numb limbs ; and only after persistent inquiries on the part of my elders as to why I obstinately adopted this attitude did I stammer out the truth. The relief was untold when I was assured that snakes did not abound in Upper Grosvenor Street, and that even if they did, they could not walk up four flights of stairs to the top of a tall house.

But here is the strange consideration—it was always the non-existent which had terror for me, while its counterpart in actual life I would have viewed with complacency. A live Bogie would probably have been an adorable playmate ; a live bear I should probably have wanted to annex ; a live reptile, though a repellent

object to me, had its peculiar interest as a curiosity. One day Rowland called me into his room : " If I trust you with a solemn secret will you promise never to tell anyone as long as you live ? " he asked importantly. I swore the required oath and would have gone to the stake rather than break it. He thereupon opened a wooden book-box which had been given him for his school books, and the thin evil head of a snake with a forked tongue and bright beady eyes uprose out of the darkness and hissed angrily at us. " His name is ' Hisser,' " said Rowland, " and he lives on live frogs and flies. Not a soul knows that I have got him." His voice vibrated with pride, and I was enormously elated at being allowed to share such an important secret. Whence Hisser came out of the void and how he returned to it, I know not ; but so it has always been through life—it is the unreal, the ills of the imagination which can torture one ; in face of actual danger or sorrow a curious courage arises ; and in sight of Death itself there steals over one a sense of detachment . . . of indifference. . . .

III

Meanwhile in my less substantial grip on the world of actuality, I sought to get my bearings in this decidedly puzzling existence.

I fancy that, from the first, I was, of my very generation, full of sentiment. Even in the nursery in those late Victorian times we were inclined to introspection, to ill-suppressed poetry, to pretty, morbid imaginings. The atmosphere was less electrically charged then. Life moved so leisurely, if somewhat boringly, that from the start we had plenty of time to dwell on sunsets, on thoughts of the Grave, on the pleasing melancholy of things in general. In more material matters we were adjured to reverence our " pastors and masters," though I never made out who these could be ; and we were early trained to be very polite to our inferiors because they were such entirely different clay to ourselves. *Noblesse oblige* was expounded to us and it meant that you always prefaced an order to the servants by the word *please*. Above everything we understood that there were only two classes in the world—Ourselves and the people who were not ladies and gentlemen.

One day I heard an under-housemaid talking to my nurse, and she made me very angry. " It's very hard we should have to work all our lives," she grumbled, " and, after all, it's only money makes the difference between us and the gentry." I went away boiling with wrath at the ignorance of the girl. Money indeed ! Why money—at least too much of it—was vulgar ; I had heard my elders say it was blue blood which made the difference. For the first time I hunted out a pedigree which my grandfather had had printed, and poring over it, much impressed, discovered that it began with quite a long array of the Kings of England. I had yet to learn that most pedigrees do.

"We seem to have a lot of Royal blood in our veins!" I said to my mother tentatively. I was looking at the veins in my wrists and I saw with satisfaction that they were blue; yet when I pricked my finger I was disconcerted to find that very common-looking red blood oozed forth.

"The M——s," remarked my mother with an amused smile, "start their pedigree quite seriously with Adam and Eve—but I think there must be a few gaps in the descent! And old Lord Chesterfield always used to have the portraits of Adam de Stanhope and Eve de Stanhope hanging up amongst his ancestors!"

It was an uncomfortable reflection that the grumbling housemaid was remotely descended from the same stock as myself.

I, however, probed further into the pedigree and I found to my relief that I had an ancestor called "Robert with the Beard," Lord of Tours and Vian, who came over with William the Conqueror, and was given a large estate in Cumberland and the Conqueror's own sword, on condition that he kept this land free from "Wolves and Robbers." Moreover this Robert was described as a near kinsman of the Conqueror himself. I gathered that most people seemed quite vain if they had an ancestor who came over with the Conqueror at all, but our Robert had actually come over as one of the family party. I took Rowland into my confidence, and asked him proudly if he had ever discovered that we were related to the great Norman.

"Oh, *that's* nothing!" he said, "William the Conqueror's mother took in washing!"

This was a crushing historical fact; and, later, another aspect of the situation was presented for my consideration. I heard two ladies talking:

"My ancestors came over with the Conqueror," said one with smug satisfaction.

"And mine," quoth the other with greater complacency, "were here to receive them!"

Moreover, to go farther back than William of Doubtful Origin, our universal Ancestress herself did not seem to be of much account, for, not long after, my sister further bewildered me. "They have discovered," she announced with finality, "that Eve was really a gorilla who sat up in a tree and shied cocoa-nuts at the passers-by!"

"But there were no passers-by in Eden," I objected sceptically.

"*Weren't* there!" she retorted contemptuously. "There were lots of other gorillas and lots of jolly little devils!"

I thought wistfully that it sounded a livelier Eden than that with which my chief theological work, *The Peep of Day*, had familiarized me. Eve, I had always felt secretly, must have been very bored before she ever began chatting with a snake like Hisser, and I had always been sorry for her in the fuss which was subsequently

made about that silly old apple. . . . But through all my shifting faith in every other Creed there remained one to which I clung happily. My mother with the violet eyes, the sweet voice, the gracious manner, could never have descended from a gorilla or anything objectionable ; and this was endorsed by the verdict of a woman in Blackburn's lace shop. " Whenever I see Mrs. Pickering," she said to my nurse, " I always say the same thing—' That lady may be dressed as plain as you please, but directly she opens her lips, you know her for what she is—*you'd never Doubt Her.*' " After all, if one has two definitely objectionable ancestors like Eve and a laundress, it is comforting to have a mother whom even a shop-woman could Never Doubt.

IV

Next to the pride of Family came the pride of Dress.

From the time when I was five years old I was usually taken to Great Marylebone Church on Sunday afternoons because it was adjacent to Harley Street where some of the relations afterwards gave us tea. The first time I attended the service I must admit I was in a state of secret trepidation, for Evelyn had assured me that before the sermon new-comers were sent up to the ceiling in a bladder-ball, and if it burst one came down in pieces. Having escaped this fate, however, I took heart and began to enjoy myself.

I soon found that I liked going to that particular church for a reason which I kept to myself. The charity school-girls used to be present in their quaint old costumes with white cross-overs, mob caps and long yellow mittens. And as I walked past them, carrying an enormous prayer-book which my grandmother Pickering had given me, I saw them nudge each other, and more than once I heard them say—" Here is the smart little lady coming ! " I had one dress of which I was so proud that I remember every detail of it. It was a bright pink silk adorned by a shorter topskirt of open-work lace. With this I wore a broad pink sash and a white hat with drooping ostrich feathers to match. I also had a tiny pink parasol with a border of rosebuds. It was a bitter disappointment when the girls failed to notice me, but when they saw me, behind my mother's ample skirts I bowed to them with immense dignity as I had seen the Princess of Wales do in the park.

On week-days I also took the Princess for my model.

My mother used to drive in a tall barouche which rocked gently as it was drawn leisurely by two high-stepping horses. These animals my father had named Strongbow and Xerxes, but the coachman, fancying the first had some reference to strong bones, named them for short Bones and Jerkses. Sometimes when my mother went to a party she sent me for a drive round the park alone. Then, indeed, I touched the zenith of human happiness. I placed myself on a cushion in the exact centre of the carriage ;

I opened her parasol of blue silk which had an elaborately carved stick of real ivory and was flounced with real lace; and I bestowed on all and sundry an Alexandra bow.

Looking back, it is curious to compare the Hyde Park on which my eyes then fell and the same place to-day, with its scanty sprinkling of people on the grass-plot and a few motors scurrying along the roadway. In the season then the park was a gay scene—the lawn packed with women in elaborate trailing dresses, the riders passing to the Row in a continuous stream, and the carriages wedged four rows deep—only at intervals were the latter able to move a few paces, and on a hot summer day the heat from the crowd of horses was overpowering. My mother hated getting wedged in a queue, as it was impossible to get out of it again under an hour or more; but the old coachman loved showing off his horses, and he always dexterously contrived to get at loggerheads with some policeman who promptly ordered him into the ranks.

And as we sat there roasting in the heat my mother used to regale me with stories of long ago which she had heard from *her* mother. "You cannot imagine what the Park was like in old days," she said—"Then every one drove in beautiful old coaches with men in elaborate liveries standing at the back. This place was a fascinating sight then—not like these degenerate days! I cannot bear these dowdy modern carriages, and I particularly dislike those new-fangled Victorias." For a Victoria was then the last thing out in genteel poverty, and had about it even a flavour of approaching democracy, since it could be used with one horse and no footman.

Up the centre of the roadway a clear space was always reserved, and almost daily up this there trotted a policeman bursting with importance, followed by the Royal carriage, a barouche higher than our own, and prancing chestnut horses wearing distinctive red rosettes. In it sat the Princess of Wales, looking a vision of grace, and on the back seat in a row sat the three Princesses dressed all alike and with their long hair floating over their shoulders. Sometimes another carriage was to be seen of which people took scanty notice, but in it was a remarkably pretty little girl. It was Princess Alix of Hesse with her sisters, then on their annual visit to Queen Victoria; and the crowd, looking casually at the exquisite, refined face of the youngest girl, little dreamed of the awful fate which awaited her.

In those days no one went away for week-ends or short visits, and London remained crowded till the middle of July. The county families came up in a solid block to "do" the season, and there they remained to the bitter end, while their daughters grew paler and more anæmic with constant gaiety and late nights. Even as a child I think I gathered that the conversation was divided into three periods. In the first, it was "Have you been to the Academy?"

In the second—"Are you going to Ascot?" In the third—"When do you leave town?" No sooner did the latter stage arrive than the gay throng vanished as if by magic, and the shutters went up in all West-end houses. Those who remained in town, discreetly concealed themselves, and if discovered, gave a plausible and apologetic excuse for their presence. My father and mother were thought peculiar because they never went away till the end of August, and enjoyed the quiet when London was empty.

V

Yet ever behind my love of the world and its frivolity, I cherished that pathetic secret that I was to die young. I tried to persuade myself that it did not matter very much, because I had been told that Heaven was really a much pleasanter place than Earth, and there I should have the additional advantage of wings to get about with. Sometimes I pictured with immense satisfaction how my relations would grieve when I was gone. Yet as the date of my translation to a higher sphere actually approached, I viewed the prospect with less and less complacency, even while I strove to face it bravely. I wrote my Will in verse from a strictly orthodox standpoint, beginning thus:

> When I leave this World below
> Where there's nort but Sin and Woe
> When I seek the World Above
> Where there's nort but Joy and Love, etc.

And in it I bequeathed a gold pencil-case—my greatest treasure—to a small boy to whom I was then engaged. He had proposed to me in due form at a Twelfth-Night party and I had not liked to tell him that it could never Be, as I was Doomed to Die Young.

On the eve of my fatal birthday, I went to bed with tragedy in my heart. At 3 a.m. I awoke, shivering with fright, since I knew that I had been born at a quarter-to-four in the morning and that therefore within the next three-quarters of an hour I should be transplanted willy-nilly into a lonely heaven with angels whom I now understood must be terribly well-behaved, who sang hymns incessantly and never laughed. . . . I reflected miserably that I had never heard of an angel laughing. . . . Yet even while I shivered, I fell asleep again, and was astonished when I opened my eyes once more, to find myself still in my comfortable nursery with a cheerful August sun streaming in at the window. I then resigned myself to a long life.

VI

Forthwith I set to work seriously to write my autobiography. I had several times attempted this before; but the Introduction

which I now evolved I thought particularly fine. One paragraph in it runs thus:

"It may be that I shall read this to my children, or grandchildren, sitting in the twilite on a cold winter's evening while the rudey fire burns cheerfully in the grate, and the icey wind roars pettilessly outside. Or it may be that I shall read it sitting under a shaddy tree on a calm summers evening wile the sky is red with sunset and the soft breez plays with my wite locks; wile the leaves russel overhead and the birds are twitering in their nests as they settel down to rest.

—But enuff of these Sir-Moses!"

The word which I was aiming at was evidently surmises; I had, however, an excellent memory for everything except spelling; and had already been launched on the—to me—tempestuous sea of education. My mother, little aware of the early doom which for so long had been hanging over me, had wished me, among other items, to be well grounded in French; and as I had not liked to explain to her that this would be of little use to me in Heaven, where every one spoke English, she had engaged a daily Governess to teach me—a Pole, with a Parisian accent—and a fiery temper.

My brothers were not long in discovering the latter trait, and when they were at home for the holidays, making the utmost of it. One day the youngest, Rowland, whom I called Ogee, came to me and addressed me impressively. "When Mad-Moselle comes to-day I want you to give her my salutations, and tell her that I consider her *a contemptible little shrimp.*"

"But that doesn't sound polite," I objected anxiously.

"Oh, yes, it *is* really," he explained; "You see French people have quite different ideas to us. She'll like being compared to a shrimp—it's pink and lively!"

I dared not disobey—he was a small god to me—so with a sickening misgiving at heart, soon after we started lessons, in my most suave and conciliatory voice, I delivered myself of the message with precise accuracy.

Even I was unprepared for its effect. Mademoiselle's face turned ashen white. Up she started, her eyes flashing, her whole body trembling with fury—and, at the psychological moment, Rowland passed the open door, running downstairs.

"Hodge-ee! Hodge-ee!" shrieked Mademoiselle; she flew after him and intercepted him in the hall. "I demand to know—is it true—do you consider me a CONTEMPTIBLE LITTLE SHRIMP?" Her voice rose to a yell.

And Rowland did an unpardonable thing. He was a dapper Eton boy, and he looked imperturbably at the little fury dancing and trembling before him. "No—it is *not* true," he said, very quietly. "I did not consider you a 'contemptible little shrimp'—*but—I do now!*" He lifted his hat in his best Eton manner, and walked placidly out of the house.

My morning afterwards was not a pleasant one.

In contrast to this episode was another regrettable incident which occurred at a later date when I was learning German. I had been writing out the declensions of *der Fisch*, and when I presented the result to my German governess it showed a conclusion of which I was innocent :—

Der Fisch
Des Fisches
Dem Fische
Den Fisch
Damned Fish !

" Wie dumm ! " was the sole comment of the stolid German as she placidly put her pen through the objectionable line.

But the little Pole remained a bait too tempting for any normal schoolboy to resist ; and day after day as I sought my copy-books, my miserable eyes fell on interpolations in, and additions to, the original text which it was impossible to explain away satisfactorily. One day, for instance, when I had written a translation from the French in my roundest and best writing, the sentence ran thus : " We have eaten some—" but being uncertain whether the word " *cherries* " which should have followed was spelt with one r or two, I left it till the following morning. When I hurried to add it in a few moments before Mademoiselle came, I found the sentence finished in an exact imitation of my writing so that the whole ran thus :—" We have eaten some pickled gorillas for luncheon, and are in consequence suffering from excruciating pains in a portion of our anatomy which I leave *you*, Mademoiselle, to imagine ! "

Looking back on the methods of education adopted in those days I recall that in regard to many apparently useless exercises, the alleged motive was to " make one think," whereas in my especial case it would have been better if I had been encouraged to think less. The *Child's Guide to General Knowledge*, satirized in *Alice through the Looking Glass* was a staple dish for every young palate, and had much to recommend it. But there were other books and tasks which, though employed as a species of mental gymnastics, appeared to my youthful intellect annoyingly futile.

For instance, I was told to transpose as many times as ingenuity could invent :

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way ;

i.e.

His weary way homeward the ploughman plods ;
Plods his weary way homeward the ploughman ;
Homeward his weary way plods the ploughman ;
Plods the ploughman his weary way homeward.

And so on, *ad infinitum*, till it seemed that that way madness lay, and I detested that plodding ploughman as cordially as Byron ever hated Horace. Indeed that book has been a source of tribu-

lation to me through life, for, the habit once acquired, never do I write a paragraph that I do not at once want to transpose it—and to continue transposing it till I have lost all clue to the original sense.

My other pet aversion was a book of "Comparisons," exercises in which were as follows: If one object was a given size, what size in strict proportion should some other object be? For instance, the respective height of a thimble and a pail, or a horse and a mammoth would be given, and if one were increased or diminished as stated, what would be the height of the other relatively? The questions were ingenious, the answers primarily a matter of opinion, since none could reply to such conundrums with accuracy. But the book became less popular with my governess after parodies in my brothers' handwriting had appeared in the text, two of which I recall:—

"If a flea were six feet high, what height would Buckingham Palace be?"

"If Mademoiselle were smaller in her own estimation, what size would be the swollen head of the Shah of Persia?"

VII

Education thus, in much, proved for me a Thorny Way; but I had two consolations. For one, among my lesson-books I concealed a round pencil-case, which I secretly replenished with brown sugar, and when existence proved particularly strenuous I slipped behind Mademoiselle's chair and, tipping the pencil case into my mouth, I convinced myself that Life still held something sweet. The other consolation was that of the Pen.

In an old black-leather copy-book I have still verses illustrative of the various stages of instruction which I endured and the various phases of annoyance which these severally occasioned me. From the first I was always kicking against the pricks, wanting to teach myself—to pursue the things which I hungered to know, rather than those which it was considered advisable for me to learn. I chafed over what I felt was the unendurable waste of time expended upon items of little interest, when there was so much in this marvellous world which I was dying to understand. All the prosaic, unimaginative phases of learning bored me. Spelling was anathema; grammar irritating; parsing intolerable. After a lesson in the two latter, I angrily scribbled the following as a soothing reaction.

A LESSON IN GRAMMAR FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN

One day a snail said to a cow
"My dear, I wish that I was thou!"
The cow then answered to the snail
"And I my fortunes do bewail,
For I am sure if I was thee
Intensely happy I should be!"

"We both have horns," the snail replied,
"In horns I'm sure I take a pride:
But look at yours—and look at mine!
As much alike as rope to twine!"

"But then, you see," replied the cow,
"I can't pull mine in, anyhow.
I've tried for hours—I've tried for days
While all the others stand and gaze
And wonder what I want to do.
Belovéd Snail! would me wos you!

"Alas!" she ceased and softly sighed.
"Alas, my friend——" the snail replied,
"If I was thee, and me was you,
Then we should both know what to do!"

The education, however, which my mother's reading provided was very different. Homer, for instance, enchanted me. I loved the streams of gore and the whistling souls of which he spoke gloatingly; and as a parody upon Pope's translation, probably written when I was about ten years old, I find the following:—

Thick in the fight, now darting here—now there—
Behold Pigstylion's Boy, his son and heir.
From his fair home, borne on ambition's wings
Early he left his mother's apron-strings
And, seeking the fierce storms of war to brave,
Found there, alas, an all-unsought-for grave.
Stern Ajax viewed those features, pale and fair;
"Conceited Chit!" he cried—"Get change of air!"
In that slight form he made a deadly rent,
The maddened soul came issuing at the vent,
With a deep groaning, whistling, ghastly sound
Sped to dark Pluto's regions underground.
The quiv'ring limbs in pools of streaming gore
Sunk on the plane to never rise no more.
While Ajax, viewing with contemptuous eye
The mangled corpse which at his feet did lie,
Fierce thundered forth—"So perish all our foes!"
Then calmly turned and blew—his mighty nose!

In addition to the outpourings of my Muse on every occasion which ruffled or pleased me, there was one permanent source of inspiration which endured for many years.

I had early conceived an immense admiration for the Princess of Wales, and through most of my childhood or girlhood, I cherished like a religion my reverence for her. One of my aunts was her lady-in-waiting, and I looked upon this happy being with an envy too deep for words. Further, I instituted a small shrine for an autographed photograph of H.R.H. which she had sent me, and which I kept always adorned with fresh flowers.

The hero-worship of our early years may be foolish in its intensity, but it at least serves to gild existence with an interest of which commonsense would rob it. No sportsman ever chased his quarry with greater zest than I pursued the beautiful Princess who

represented to me the epitome of all romance. I made a point of seeing her at least thirty times during each season. If I exceeded that amount it was a happy year—under it the year was a failure. I kept a daily chronicle of her doings gleaned from the papers, and since I had heard my elders speak of "red-letter days," the days when I saw her personally were laboriously recorded in red ink. I had likewise a book of verses which I indited to her, and in which each time she is referred to either by name or pronoun the sacred word is adorned with hieroglyphics in imitation of an old missal. I have mislaid the book, and I only recall one very long poem descriptive of my watching in the park, entitled "*Nothing but one among menny*," the last verses of which are full of delicious bathos:

"Nothing but one among menny"
She does not know how I wait
For hours—so weary and tired—
Watching that Enterance Gate.
She never will know how I love Her,
How my heart throbs quick and fast,
As high above all the surrounding throng
Her carriage comes dashing past!

"Nothing but one among menny"
Who under those plane-trees pace;
Only a little "school-room girl,"
With a pale and ugly face.
Nothing but one of that ceaseless throng
Which She every day must see,
—To *Her* I am "one among menny"—
She is Life—She is All to me!

Only here and there—perhaps mercifully—does some verse out of these numerous effusions come back to me. I remember that H.R.H. had a beautiful Chinese dog called Joss who was very devoted to her. One day when she was going by rail to some function, the dog broke loose from the people who held it, and raced after the departing train till it was exhausted and someone contrived to stop it. I forthwith wrote to Joss a parody on the *Welcome to Alexandra*, written by the Laureate at the time of her marriage, which it will be recalled ended in the haunting refrain:

For Saxon, or Dane, or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra.

My "*Welcome from the Dogs of Britain to Joss*" ended thus:—

Chinese dog as rough as a bear,
Envied pet of a Princess fair,
Pet of the Fair One from over the Sea!
Oh, joy of all creatures, return to thy home,
Go guard Her, protect Her, but never more roam!

For mongrels, or Curs, or lap-dogs we,
Puppies of high or of lower degree,
We can each of us bark in our welcome of thee,
Celestial Joss!

Needless to say, since I was extremely sensitive in regard to this hero-worship, it provided my eldest brother with a never failing opportunity for torment. I find the following tragic list:—

INSULTS OFFERED TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS.

Offences.	*The Month of April.*	*Result.*
Spencer	Peppered the Princess and the Shrine all over.	Unrevenged
Spencer	Put a dab of mustard over the Princess's hair	revenged
Spencer	Put fish-bone in the Shrine.	revenged
Spencer	A mutton-chop bone in the Shrine.	still unrevenged
Spencer	potatoe ditto	revenged
Spencer	Too dreadful to mention	trebly revenged.

I have no recollection to what the last distracted entry referred, but I remember the episode of the dab of mustard which I found neatly arranged on the glass over H.R.H.'s hair, so that she looked as though her locks had turned a ginger hue in the night, while underneath was written the offensive legend—*La Princesses aux carottes.* I boiled with indignation at the sacrilege and for weeks subsequently I expended all my pocket-money in a loyal attempt at avenging this outrage. Spencer found carrots in his bed, in his bath, in his boots, in his pockets, in his socks. And it must be emphasized that this was done, not as a jest on my part, but as a solemn vendetta, also that it required moral courage as well as pecuniary outlay, for I was mortally afraid of him. But he took no notice: he ignored my foolish efforts with a dignity which baffled me.

Then one morning—long after both the crime and its punishment were of the past—I noticed that the tea at breakfast had a most terrible taste. My brother was drinking coffee, so it was useless appealing for his opinion; but after a while he got up, opened the lid of the tea-pot without a word, and left the room. With a sinking heart I peered inside. From within came the most noxious odour I have ever smelt, and there, sodden and repulsive in the hot tea, lay a mass of decaying carrots—carrots which had been about his bath and about his bed many months before. *And I had been drinking the brew!*

Nevertheless I bided my time. Spencer having been called Spenny in the days of babyhood, the name drifted into Penny, and there was an alarming institution at home known as the "Penny

Post." For when Penny had something disagreeable to convey—which as he grew older was a very frequent occurrence—he wrote it, and left it on a particular table in the hall which was held sacred to his correspondence. The victim on receipt of this missive was requested to answer, also in writing ; but when he or she had framed an elaborate defence, it was usually returned, torn in fragments, with the aggressively curt legend—" *Unread.*" This was not a fair method of argument, but I evolved other uses for the " Penny Post." One day, for instance, an advertisement arrived for ladies' garments addressed to the then non-existent " Mrs. S. Pickering." This was forthwith placed on the sacred slab with my addendum :—

There's a poem in all that the wild wind sighs,
There are truths in the sky so blue,
There are Sermons in *Stones*, elder brother,
Why not in advertisements too ?

Oh, softly this envelope whispers to me
Above the World's scurry and din :—
" How he'll wish he was rid of that said ' Mrs. S.'
When the bills come all galloping in ! "

Thereafter, for a space, was silence.

While on the subject of the Princess of Wales, I may mention one or two incidents in connection with her which, although they happened before I was born, yet I assimilated with keen interest. One day my mother gave me a beautiful old slide of fine paste, which had formed part of a stomacher in mediæval times. She told me that her maid, unknown to her, had pinned this in her dark hair for the Guards' ball which was given on the marriage of the Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra. Worn with real diamonds, no one knew it apart from the genuine stones, and my mother never discovered it was in her hair till someone expatiated to her on its extreme beauty. She told me that the ball in question was one of the prettiest sights she remembered. The Guards stood in two long lines and crossed their swords, and the young Prince and Princess danced down the room under the glittering archway. He looked extremely boyish, and she was quite beautiful. It was essentially a love-match, and I have seen the letter which the Prince wrote to one of his greatest friends when he went out to Brussels to propose to her :—

Sept. 10*th*, 1862.

I proposed to the young Princess out walking, and I was immediately accepted, and I can assure you that I feel now the happiest of mortals. The two days before were rather nervous ones for both of us, though I think the Princess knew what was coming. I only hope that some day you may also be as happy as I am. I telegraphed to the Queen immediately yesterday, and you can imagine how pleased she was to hear

of it, and I only hope and trust that it may be the means of rendering her sad life rather happier than it now is.

My great-aunt Di, Mrs. Edward Coke, and Mr. Charles Wood, afterwards Lord Halifax, were in attendance during the honeymoon at Abergeldie. The great delight of the Royal couple was to have picnics on which they took no servants and did all the work and the cooking themselves. To Mr. Wood fell the task of cooking the potatoes, and he was much distressed to find that those especial potatoes invariably refused to be cooked. The Princess collected the sticks for the fire. One officious lady in attendance could not be made to understand that it was the mere fact of not being waited on which was a joy to her mistress, and she bored the Princess exceedingly by always imploring to be allowed to collect the firewood and save H.R.H. all trouble.

I have found an undated letter from my mother to her father, which seems to refer to a slightly later period.

> We had a visit yesterday from Edward Coke—they are staying at Leicester's house ; but Di is now in waiting, and is gone with the Prince and Princess to Ascot, and he is going to run down to Derbyshire for a week as being in London bores him.
>
> He said he expected Di to return at the end of the week quite knocked up, what with being out all day in the grilling sun, and up half the night. He said someone remarked to him, " I wonder Mrs. Coke is alive ! " He answered : "I think the wonder is, not that *she* is alive, but that the Princess is alive," for he says she knocks up one lady-in-waiting after another, and keeps on going herself !—that they never are quiet for a single night, when they do not go to a ball they go to the play—he said he never saw such children as they are —they could not live without amusement !

VIII

My own childish romance in reference to H.R.H. had its origin, I think, in the passionate, all-devouring love of beauty which haunted my childhood. Beauty of face always stirred me powerfully, as did beauty of outline, of colour ; beauty of nature in all her moods ; beauty of mist and sea and sky. Lovely hues were a joy to my eye, just as the music and the rhythm of words were a joy to my ear. And meanwhile in this wonderful world-harmony which, dimly, vaguely, I felt around me, I feared that I alone struck a discordant note—that my appearance and my dreams lay far apart.

The fact was that my brothers had early informed me that I had a mouth like that of Mrs. Waddup, the old cook whom we called Waddy, and who was remarkable for anything rather than physical beauty. I dwelt painfully on this assurance till, by and

by, I recognized in it a suitable subject for prayer. Nightly I was, of course, instructed to say my orthodox prayers before entering my cot. But I found these stereotyped petitions highly unsatisfactory. I was made to beg for daily bread and things I didn't really want, while things which I needed badly, a facility for spelling and an attractive face, were never even mentioned. So I arranged and wrote out a postscript prayer for myself; and as soon as I was left alone, I used to kneel up in my bed, and retail my actual wants. I have this prayer still, and after a clause begging that I may be made less stupid, another paragraph runs thus:—

"And please God, I shall be very much obliged if You will make my mouth less like Waddy's; and if You see Your way to it, I shall be glad if You will do so very soon. But if it is not Thy will to manage it, please will You contrive to make me mind less?"

At length a period was put in unexpected fashion to my secret tears and prayers on this topic, and to the bathos of many foolish, heart-broken verses which likewise poured from my pen.

I was taken to see an uncle, the owner of a picture of a little ancestor of mine who had once lived at Tichmarsh in Northamptonshire. The father of this boy, Sir Gilbert Pickering, known as "Fiery Pickering," had been High Chamberlain to Cromwell, and one of the Judges of Charles I, but I was consoled by the information that, even so, he had not signed the king's death-warrant and had returned to his allegiance in the days of Charles II. Meanwhile, staring at the little pictured son of the all-but regicide, I felt a curious affinity with him. He was depicted wearing a wine-coloured coat with a deep collar of lace, and in his dress the fine garments of the Cavalier appeared to blend with the simplicity of the Puritan. His soft, luminous eyes seemed to smile at me across the centuries; and as I smiled back, I noticed that his hair was the exact colour of mine, and worn long and parted just as I wore mine.

Then as I stood viewing him with interest, I heard an exclamation from my elders—"Do look—*the two faces are identical*!" and I saw that they were looking from me to the portrait. And next, as I still smiled at that little boy of long ago who was my counterpart, I felt not merely comforted but elated, for not only did he seem to me singularly pleasing, but I remarked with profound satisfaction that *his mouth bore no resemblance to Waddy's*!

To clinch my newly-found happiness, I determined to test my mother diplomatically on this crucial matter. "Mamma," I said tentatively, a few days later, when we were out driving, "has it ever struck you that I am like anybody in particular?"

"'Anybody in particular?'" echoed my mother absently:—"Well, sometimes it *has* struck me from the old prints that you have the exact profile of the young Catherine de' Medici!"

And Catherine had a nose like a hook. . . . .

* * * * *

One other recollection belonging to this period drifts irrelevantly out of the past. My mother had been regaling me with a story of Evelyn's childhood—how a letter had once been intercepted written by her when a small girl. A stationer had been unpunctual in supplying her with a child's magazine entitled *Kind Words* which she had ordered from him, and her remonstrance, intended to be very wrathful and crushing, ran thus :—

DEAR MR. SMITH,—

Please send me kind words. I would rather have kind words from you than anybody else, but you are always badly behindhand.

Yours affectionately,
EVELYN PICKERING.

A few days after I heard this story, my sister (by then, of course, grown up, and busily painting), called out to me : " Do just write to Pond, and tell him to send me some areca-nut tooth-paste at once. Tell him I want it immediately." With the remembrance of Mr. Smith's letter still entertaining me, I was anxious to emulate it, and penned an order to Mr. Pond, the chemist, on a post-card, which he showed to me proudly long years afterwards.

Miss Pickering, Senior, stands in need
Of a pot of Areca-nut paste,
And requests that you will dispatch it at once
With the greatest of possible haste.
This morning she scarcely used any at all,
For tomorrow there is not enuff,
And she could not exist a whole day without some
Of that most indispensible stuff !

'Waddy.'

[*Cornelius Janssens pinxit.*

CHRISTOPHER,

Son of Sir Gilbert Pickering, Bart., of Tichmarsh, Northamptonshire, by his wife, *née* Elizabeth Montagu.

CHAPTER III

Little Pitchers

I

WHEN I was eight years old we spent the greater part of a year in Germany, as my mother was ill and was ordered there for the baths. Upon our first arrival on Teutonic soil, she felt something tugging her clothes violently. She looked round to discover a large party of inquisitive geese headed by an old gander who had seized hold of her shawl and was jerking it savagely. "What a welcome to Germany!" she exclaimed.

After some time at Schlangenbad, we stayed for the entire winter at Wildbad, where we were the only people in the Hotel Klump besides our own maid and courier. The life was dull, and my only diversion was an occasional drive in a sledge with scarlet trappings and jangling bells, or an occasional visit to the nursery of the little Klumps, Willie and Lulu. Two events remain prominent in my recollection.

One was a melancholy Christmas Eve, when, as my mother slept upon the sofa, I sat peering out into the darkness of the snowy Square below, suffering from acute *Heimweh*, and then came the sudden, unexpected summons to see a real German Christmas-tree in the hotel dining-room. There it stood, dazzling my eyes as I entered the room, reaching from floor to ceiling, a gorgeous vision, with frosted boughs and glittering lights, while, all down a long table adjacent, presents were laid, not only for the household, but for many of the townsfolk. Even the old crossing-sweeper came to fetch her gift with the rest, nor was the poor little *Engländerin* forgotten. The other incident was when the sister of the proprietor became engaged to an officer, and in true Teutonic style went to church with her future *brautigam*, accompanied by all her relatives and his, to be solemnly betrothed. Afterwards the affianced couple set off to pay a formal round of calls, but ere they did so they came to pay their respects to my mother as the only occupant of the hotel. The *Brautigam* was a very imposing person in a resplendent uniform; he clicked his heels together and saluted on entering the room, and his sword clanked as he sat down, while Fräulein Klump, swathed in handsome furs, nervously aired her best English. And the first sentence she said, indicating me with her forefinger, was "Willie loves she very much."

But what I did rejoice in throughout that monotonous winter

was the Black Forest. I wandered through its mysterious depths and saw it in different moods—with the sun filtering through the dark spikes of the towering fir-trees or the snow weighing down their great boughs and powdering the baby shoots at their feet—a whole forest of Christmas-trees! It lured me with its magical charm so completely that, although I hated Wildbad, I wept copiously on leaving my beloved Schwartzenwald. "Was fehlt die Kleine?" demanded the guard as the train steamed away. "Die Kleine liebt das Vaterland!" explained my mother; and the guard beamed.

Not long after we returned to England we left the only home I had so far known for a larger house in Bryanston Square, which my father had recently purchased from Lord Kimberley, and which, being the other side of Oxford Street, Jane pronounced to be quite in the "shrubbubs." Peters, the carriage-builder, who had been our landlord in Upper Grosvenor Street, insisted on his uttermost pound of flesh in the form of dilapidations, refusing all reasonable compromise. My father had to do the house up from cellar to attic at heavy cost; and having accomplished this, we drove away and gave up the key of the old home *en route* for the new. A couple of hours later the pipes in the deserted house burst as though weeping over our departure, and wrecked all the new decorations. I have never seen my father so delighted at anything as when the news reached him of the discomfiture of Peters owing to the delivery of that key in the nick of time.

All my life I have had one superstition which no common sense can eradicate. The instant I go into a house I can feel the atmosphere which pervades it for good or for evil. Some houses give me a sense of peace and rest, so that I feel soothed on entering them and quit them with reluctance. Others produce a sense of despondency, of actual *malaise*, as though the people who have lived in them have left behind them something of their own unrest, or their own evil nature.

As we walked up the steps into our new home, my father turned to my mother. "God grant, dearest," he said, "that we may have many, many happy years before us in this house." And was it fancy that as I, a small child again weeping with Victorian sentimentality at leaving my old home, followed them into the new, an awful sense of disaster, of coming trouble, appalled me?

Nor was the anticipated evil long in beginning to work. From the first, tragedy dogged our life there; and Spencer was the first victim.

My father had arranged a splendid laboratory for him in the basement, fitted up with every contrivance to facilitate scientific work and every precaution against misadventure, but he could not guard against the rashness of youth. In a dangerous experiment, when the operator should have worn a mask, the boy of sixteen

contented himself with holding a fireguard before his face. There was a deafening explosion, and the men from the pantry opposite rushed in to find him unconscious on the floor, his features and eyes unrecognizable owing to the blood which poured in torrents from the countless pieces of glass embedded in his face. Weeks in a dark room followed, with blindness and disfigurement hanging over him. "The sudden slamming of a door may be sufficient to cost him his sight," said the oculists; "if he is startled or irritated, it cannot be saved." It seemed unthinkable that Spencer, who had been considered the handsomest boy at Eton, who had gone up for the Brackenbury Scholarship and as a result been accepted for Balliol while still at school, should be suddenly plunged into lifelong darkness; and even when the nightmare lifted and it was said his sight was saved and his looks unmarred, a second accident at tennis necessitated the removal of one eye, and so consummated a tragedy which, although I cannot dwell on its after-effects here, time but accentuated.

II

Meanwhile in the silent house, in which we crept about stealthily as in the presence of death itself, I too had found my own little tribulation.

I had a delightful big room for myself upstairs, planned with every care to be gay and pretty. I might almost say I had a whole suite, for the room next to mine was set apart for my nurse, and the room beyond, as large as my own, became her workroom. But the whole was remote; and, left much alone during my brother's illness, I peopled it with terrors of my own creation.

One day I found a servant washing a curious maroon mark on the stone stairs near my room, and she looked up at me strangely. "No gitting this out!" she remarked dryly.

"One of the workmen must have upset his paint, don't you think?" I suggested, for it was not unlike the colour of the wainscoting.

"*Paint?*" echoed the maid contemptuously. "This ain't paint! Paint'll wash out easy. This is *something else.*"

She dropped her voice, and suddenly I understood. *Blood* would never wash out—at least the blood of *a murdered person.* There had been a murder committed in the house, that was why it felt so eerie; and the murder had been just outside my room! I stole back to my lesson-books with horror in my heart, and, dwelling on this dreadful discovery, I strove to reconstruct the crime which had been committed, till I had it all distinct in my imagination, and wrote it down.

About this time I likewise read a tale which made a deep impression on me. In what book or paper I read it, I know not, but the story, as I recollect it, was that of an Oriental who smashed a sacred

jar and murdered the priest who had guarded it. The murderer fled, and buried pieces of the broken pottery deep in the earth, each far, far apart from the rest. But wherever he hid a piece there a stain of moist blood—blood which would never dry—rose to the surface, till his accusers had thereby traced all the fragments of the sacred vessel, and, having pieced these together, confronted him with the proofs of his crime, and his own doom.

The lurid tale, told very realistically, haunted my imagination. I pictured what would be the feelings of a suspected murderer . . . and how awful it would be if one failed to prove one's innocence. I wondered if some dusky Oriental would suspect and shadow me on account of the maroon stain on the stairs. . . . By what process of thought I cannot say, my alarm was gradually transferred to the furniture in my room, which I was sure looked at me with an accusing, resentful air. It became endowed for me with a sinister and threatening individuality, particularly one mahogany wardrobe, which I felt had a morose, sombre and suspicious personality. Thenceforward, an unconscious little victim of animism inherited through the ages, I endured a martyrdom as ridiculous as it was pitiable.

I was put to bed at seven o'clock, because I was considered a delicate child. But on summer evenings, with the sun still shining and the gay world of London astir on pleasure bent, sleep was impossible. I could feel that merry life pulsating without ; I saw streaks of golden light creep from behind the darkened blinds, and I was confronted by a choice of two evils. If I remained visibly awake, I was scolded because I had not gone to sleep ; if I feigned sleep, I was speedily left alone to face an even worse situation—solitude with that dreadful, sinister furniture and all sorts of unfathomable evils threatening me.

In any case, there was, each night, that awful time to be faced when Jane went down to supper. Directly I heard her leave her room, I planted myself bolt upright in bed, with my back to the wall, and I began bowing solemnly to each article of furniture in turn, to placate it. What exactly I feared would happen if I ceased to bow, I do not know—I never dared to risk such a contingency. There I sat, and as soon as I had been the round of one series of bows, I started at the beginning again. More and more weary I grew—by and by, more and more sleepy ; but I never paused. The head of no unfortunate royal personage striving to conciliate the mob ever ached worse than did mine in that nightly endeavour to keep on good terms with the furniture till the magic hour of ten, when I at last heard the housemaids arrive to put hot water in the bedrooms. Then, utterly worn out, I fell back upon the pillow and dropped asleep.

Once, indeed, when I had dozed off earlier out of sheer exhaustion, I awoke in sudden alarm—bears and bogies were surely closing in

upon me because of my neglect—and before I realized what I was doing, I sped across the floor and pealed the bell. Then I listened in dire dismay to the footsteps rushing upstairs to my assistance, for I knew not how to explain my foolish action. I would have died rather than admit that I was frightened—a coward was contemptible—and there was something in the evil nature of that furniture which I felt no grown-up could ever be made to understand. . . . In my desperation it flashed across me that there was no disgrace in feeling sick—so, when interrogated, I gave this as the solution of my peremptory summons and drank down a dose of rhubarb with the heroism of a martyr rather than admit that cowardice had prompted that violent, involuntary peal at the bell.

Preposterous as were these terrors, I believe that all imaginative children in my day had similar experiences ; nor do I think that the superior children of to-day are exempt.

Not long since, in the country, I was questioning a tiny man, who looked like a gnome in his peaked cap and knitted coat, why he did not go out in the garden to play. " N-no," he said nervously, sidling against me. Then he took me into his confidence : " There's a yate, yeen dragon down by the yate, and he'll gobble me up ! "

" But I see no great, green dragon ! " I insisted. " There is nothing there ! "

He looked at me with contempt for my untruthfulness. " There's a yate, yeen dragon," he repeated firmly. " *I see him !* " And he walked disdainfully away.

III

In the daytime, the terrors of darkness faded into insignificance ; and I suffered only from an intense loneliness. I used to be taken across to the Square and locked in there, to be in the fresh air and out of harm's way, and I wandered about, a solitary imp enviously watching the other children playing. Once or twice, isolated members of some merry group invited me to join them, but I refused, as I had been told that I must not make friends with strangers. So I took a magnifying-glass and tried to find entertainment by watching the vagaries of the ants on the little hillocks in the pathway instead ; but after some weeks this palled, and, by and by, a deputation of three small girls waited on me shyly.

" We have talked it over," they announced, " and we think that you won't play with us because your mamma doesn't know our mammas. But we have a rule that in the Square we all know each other, and outside the Square, if our mammas don't know each other, *we* don't." So this was settled. Thenceforward in the Square, although I might not romp with them, we shared confidences, we became even bosom friends. Outside the square, we passed each

other with blank faces and averted glances—aggressively determined to emphasize the fact that our friendship within the magic railings did not constitute even a bowing acquaintance outside. Later, I used often to wish that the same sensible rule held good in society, that at parties it could be assumed that all present knew each other for the evening only. It would have saved an infinity of trouble to conscientious hostesses, and many disappointments and heartburnings to unfortunate débutantes, in those days when it was considered " bad form " to " introduce."

Among the children I made friends with in the Square were two small boys, sons of a director of the Bank of England. They had a mania for funerals at that date, and I was called upon to officiate in some prominent capacity—either as chief mourner or assistant undertaker—at these functions, which were conducted with much pomp and circumstance. The first funeral in which I took part was that of a pet frog which had belonged to them. The corpse was enclosed in a box as nearly resembling the shape of a coffin as possible, and the interment, after a solemn procession, took place on a little hillock, the grave being subsequently tended with reverent care. But having started on the profession of undertakers, we found it so absorbing that forthwith every dead thing which we could discover was treasured for a similar ovation. Affection for, or even a personal acquaintance with, the deceased became a matter of no moment. The great difficulty was to find enough corpses, and no resurrectionists ever sought for these more assiduously or eagerly than we did—even a dead butterfly was hailed with delight and made the excuse for an elaborate ceremony. Yet I do not think that we ever regarded these functions quite from the standpoint of two small children about whom I was told.

They had lost their grandfather, which turned their thoughts to the subject of funerals by an even more natural sequence than the death of a pet frog ; so, shortly after, having found a dead rat, they proceeded to give it burial.

In the middle of the obsequies, the little boy was overheard saying to his sister : " You know, Cissie, this is only the rat's *body* we are burying. It's *soul* is in heaven, sitting on a cloud singing psalms with grandpapa."

My little friends had a brother who lay prone on an elongated chair, and we gazed on him with awe. He could never run about and play with us, and we heard his nurse inform the other nurses that he was " a cripple, all becos his ma tight-laced so ! " Meanwhile the mother flitted through London society, a gay matron whose harmless vagaries would have caused no comment in these days, but who then shocked the other matrons by the girlish fashion of her garments, the powder on her face, the golden sheen of her hair, and the fact that she actually danced, although the mother of a family. Nor was her conversation Victorian. Many years after-

wards, when I was going to balls, she was still as lively as ever; and as I sat near her at a ball-supper one day, I recollect a man coming up to her with the outstretched hand of greeting. "You don't know me from Adam!" he complained.

"Of course I do!" came the quick rejoinder. "You've more on!"

There was, to the end, a childish joyousness about her behaviour which left her contemporaries blank with amazement. One day she invited an elderly Major of our acquaintance to luncheon, and, somewhat bored, he accepted. When the first course was served, a huge dish was placed upon the table, and on the cover being removed, there sat a company of living kittens. When the last, a plum-pudding, graced the board, it suddenly arose and floated round the room—it was one of Hamley's toy balloons. (It must be explained that this was in the days before *dîner à la Russe* had become the custom—*dîner à la ruse*, as it was called when an innovation, for it was contended, with some justice, that when dishes were handed round, the guests first served had first chance of securing the best of each dainty.)

My last vision of our friend was at a fashionable watering-place, clad in a startling bathing-gown of orange and black, with shoulder-knots of yellow, and glittering ornaments resembling a tiara in her golden locks. That same day, I heard, a telegram arrived to say that her husband was dead or dying, and the orange garment had to be changed for widow's weeds.

Other "Square" acquaintances were the three daughters of Mrs. Behrens, who lived at the corner of Great Cumberland Place. They consisted of a handsome elder daughter and two very pretty younger sisters. Many were the confidences exchanged between us concerning the general idiosyncrasies of nurses and governesses, but outside the Square they fell under the category of strangers. In Northamptonshire, too, I again came across them, when the two pretty little sisters gave clever amateur recitations and duologues at the garden-parties both in French and English. One day at the Elwes's, when they had delivered a delightful little duologue between two imaginary lovers, I heard the mothers present loudly applauding the performance. Then one turned to the other and said *sotto voce*: "How does it strike you?" "Very clever and very charming—in *other people's children*!" oracularly pronounced the lady appealed to, who was the mother of a large family of extremely stolid offspring; and the two-edged compliment was taken up by the jealous matrons present—"Exactly what I feel—*in other people's children*! I only hope *my* children——" etc., etc. Whereupon I, innocently puzzled at this sudden anxiety on the part of ladies who had so recently been full of enthusiastic applause of the performance, chimed in reassuringly: "Oh, but, you see, I don't think *your* little boys and girls could do it!"

Some years afterwards I saw the marriage of one of my former little friends with Lord Cairns, and I thought it without exception the prettiest wedding I had ever witnessed. I heard beforehand that the bride's family were anxious for a dark day, and when the bridal procession entered the church I understood why this had been said, for the artificial light enhanced a very beautiful effect. The long train of girls who officiated as bridesmaids had been carefully chosen so that they were graduated in height as well as in the colour-scheme of their dresses and bouquets. The bride was perforce in white with white flowers, the fair-haired couple next to her wore garments the colour of a sea-shell with flowers to match, and so on, each pair representing a deeper shade of the prevailing hue which, starting from the palest blush-pink, flushed to the deepest rose, till the last couple stood, two tall, dark-haired girls, clad in vivid dresses and carrying flaming flowers. Innovations at weddings were then unusual, bride and bridesmaids seldom deviated from accepted conventions, while most fashionable weddings took place at St. George's, Hanover Square, facetiously known on that account as "the great Slaughter House."

Another friend of those early days, Cissy Parnell, likewise lived in Great Cumberland Place, but her people came under the category of those who were "*en pays de connaissance.*" Her mother, the Dowager Lady Congleton, always wore an enormous crinoline because it was *not* the fashion, and therefore a token of unworldliness. Cissy, a merry little girl, was brought up on strictly evangelical lines. Indeed, in those days an action was almost universally held to be meritorious in proportion to its being uncongenial, and this perforce included eating anything which particularly revolted one. "I get a good bit of pocket-money," Cissy confided to me once, "because, you see, I can't bear fat; and if I mortify my flesh and eat the fat on my plate at dinner, I get a penny a time—so I mortify it!" I lost sight of her for several years, and then meeting her again just as we were going to give a ball at home, I rashly sent her a formal invitation to it, and her answer came couched as follows:

> "Thank you for your invitation, dear friend, but we do not go to balls, because we find it a hindrance, rather than a help to the sole object of life—to please God."

Somewhat nettled, I rejoined:

> "You are quite right, dear friend, not to go to balls if you find yourself so easily led astray. I am glad to say I can enjoy innocent amusements without going straight to the Devil."

After that our friendship ceased.

A few doors from Lady Congleton lived Mrs. Linwood Strong and her daughters, the youngest of whom, Miss Bea Strong, is now Mrs. Steuart Erskine, the writer of many delightful books. Always attractive, with her picturesque hair and her witty but kindly

speech, certain of her phrases were so apt that they remain in my recollection. When one of four sisters married who had seemed predestined to be old maids, she regretfully summed up the situation with a natty conciseness: "But what a pity—*it spoils the set*!" And another story connected with her always pleased me.

She was once staying in a country house where the guests on Sunday occupied a pew in church situated conspicuously at the top of the aisle. What was her dismay when the clergyman on ascending the pulpit innocently gave out as the text of his sermon, "*Be strong.*" During the agonizing half-hour which followed, again and again he reiterated her name throughout his discourse, till the unfortunate members of his congregation who were seated immediately beneath his gaze were nearly asphyxiated in trying to suppress their merriment; but the climax was reached when, indignant at their, to him, inexplicable levity, he thundered forth the conclusion of his peroration with redoubled vigour: "Young men—take this as your watchword through life—Be strong!"

An almost equally painful experience once befell another girl, Miss Bradshaw. She was fishing one day in the country not far from a pathway, when, in throwing her line, the hook caught in the coat of a man who happened to be passing, and who was a complete stranger to her. Profuse apologies on her part were followed by polite, if embarrassed, assistance in releasing her victim; and, as may be imagined also, in due course, by much good-humoured chaff on the part of her family when she related her misadventure. The following Sunday in church the clergyman gave out as his text, "*I will make you fishers of men!*" and Miss Bradshaw glancing nervously round, encountered the gaze of the young man who had constituted her catch of the day before!

One constant visitor to our house was old Lady Mostyn, who impressed herself upon my memory because, like Lady Congleton, she wore a crinoline long after these had ceased to be fashionable, though in her case it was a matter of habit, not principle. One of the last times she came, she was wearing a voluminous red skirt, accordion-pleated in innumerable folds over a hoop which swayed gently as she walked, and I was interested speculating, if those wonderful folds could be pulled out straight like the pleats of a lampshade, what an amazing amount of material they would represent. Above them, she wore a short black silk jacket with elaborate sleeves and frills, and a bonnet with bright violet strings. In this gay attire she tripped into the room where a number of people were assembled, and gazing round on the company with an air of surprised bewilderment which was habitual to her, she observed in a clear treble:

"I met a cat upon the stairs—and it said *mee*-aouw!"

With the infirmities of age she became slightly childish, and one day when, a shy girl in my teens, I was calling upon her with my

mother, I had an embarrassing experience. The fashion that summer was to wear very tall hats like a chimney-pot in shape, and I had purchased a confection of pink gauze with wired gauze wings in the approved style. My friends called it the Tower of Pisa, but I was extremely pleased with it, as I felt that it added considerably to my stature. Seated in Lady Mostyn's drawing-room, however, I soon became aware that something in my appearance had arrested her attention. She sat in her wheeled chair, like a queen upon her throne, regarding me with a piercing gaze of surprise and disapproval. As the moments passed I became more and more nervously conscious of her scrutiny, which never strayed from me till at length, extending a long, thin finger, she pointed firmly at me and remarked, in a voice which sounded through the room: "*A little bit of hat! A little bit of hat!*" Her daughters tried hurriedly to distract her attention, while I wished that I could hide my—literally—diminished head. But the old lady's attention remained riveted on my gauze edifice, and at last she was perforce wheeled from the room, still reiterating in satirical, denunciatory accents: "A little bit of hat! A little bit of hat! A little bit of hat!"

It may be added that, a few days later, during a violent thunderstorm, a cabman let the dripping glass of his hansom down into the very centre of my cherished "little bit of hat," and the beautiful gauze creation collapsed like a telescope.

IV

I have, however, but a hazy remembrance of the many friends of my elders who used to come to the house in a perpetual stream despite the averred dislike of my parents to much society, yet, often when I cannot visualize them as individuals, anecdotes which I heard respecting them have stayed in my recollection. This applies to old Lord Grimthorpe, who, as those who knew him will recall, was always engaged in some active campaign—exposing some fraud, or ventilating some grievance. I remember my father laughing over the fact that "Grimthorpe never can keep quiet!" in connection with the historic quarrel respecting the alleged crack in Big Ben, and I have heard him tell a characteristic tale in regard to this trait, although, like many of the yarns remembered from my childhood, I saw no point in it at the time of its telling.

It appears that one day in the House, when still Sir Edmund Beckett-Denison, he became extremely impatient while listening to the lengthy speech of a colleague, Mr. Pember, so that at last he pencilled a note, and sent it across to the latter, couched as follows:

"You have said more than enough.—E.B.D."

Mr. Pember merely changed one letter in the missive and returned it to the sender, when it ran thus:

"You have said more than enough.—U.B.D."

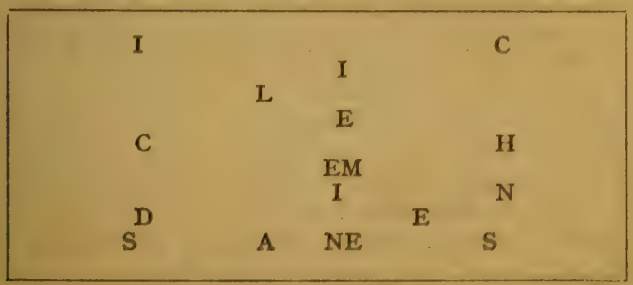
Another friend whose name was a household word, but of whom I have no personal recollection, was "Dickey Milnes," Lord Houghton; yet I can recall one of the many tales which I heard my father tell about him. In his old age he had a habit of taking out his false teeth, which presumably he found uncomfortable. One day, when travelling, he got into a first-class carriage in which there was no one else, and, tucking the rug round his legs, he removed his plate, and, placing it on the seat opposite to him, settled down into a nap.

He was awakened by a piercing yell. A woman had entered his compartment while he slumbered, and, plumping herself down upon the seat opposite, never noticed the teeth, which, being open and adjusted by a spring, promptly closed and bit her through her thin summer dress!

While on this prosaic subject I may add a tale which the Duchess of Cleveland used to tell about a party at Lord Westminster's. The old Marquis, as is well known, although a man of great wealth, was extremely parsimonious—the *on-dit* in London was that he washed all his own linen to save expense. At his grand dinner-parties magnificent épergnes of fruit were placed on the table according to the fashion of the day, but the fruit was all wax, and the real fruit handed round to the guests was of very inferior quality. One day, when the Duchess was present, a guest who was rather short-sighted innocently helped himself to a fine peach from the épergne in front of him, and, disdaining knives and forks, proceeded to bite it. Then came a short and agonized struggle, followed by the sudden appearance of a complete double set of false teeth sticking in the peach.

Another curious story which the Duchess used to relate may also be mentioned here, although I cannot tell how she heard it.

A stone with the following inscription was found in the lime quarries of Belleville in the year 1779:



It was brought to the Louvre at the request of the French Academy, who appointed a committee of six to decipher it. But the committee could not come to any agreement upon it, and each man

offered a different solution. At last the problem was solved by a quarryman from Belleville, who explained that the stone marked the bridle-path to the quarries, but that, being rough, the letters had been perforce carved wherever a smooth enough space could be found for them—thence the mystery. Deciphered thus, the savant at last read:

"Ici le chemin des ânes."

Among the many visitors to my home who came under the sacred category of "The Family" were three without mention of whom any record of those days would be incomplete.

My great-aunt, Lady Anson, the second daughter of "Coke of Norfolk," was sixteen years younger than her next sister, my grandmother; and the members of her numerous family whom I saw incessantly throughout my young days were Anne, Lady Rosebery; Eliza, Lady Waterpark; and Fanny, Mrs. Isted. The two former lived in London.

Anne being but six months older than my grandmother, aunt and niece had been brought up like sisters, and were presented at Court on the same day. My grandmother used to relate how they all got into their respective sedan-chairs in the hall, Lady Anson going first, and she and Anne following in turn. It was the day of large hoops and high feathers, so that the tops of the sedan-chairs were opened in order that the tall plumes should not be injured or crushed.

Anne, as I recall her, was a gentle, placid old lady whom it was impossible not to love. She enjoyed her life to the utmost, and delighted in the recognition of her own popularity. Her house in Piccadilly was a gathering-place for all members of her family, and every Sunday her rooms were crowded. "Yesterday," she said once complacently to my mother, "I went out just for a short drive of under an hour, and how many people do you think I found had called when I got in—sixteen!" Sometimes, when I grew older, she would look at me a little sadly when we were alone together and murmur with a note of regretful pathos: "*Ah, la jeunesse! la jeunesse!*" Yet she had one equally genuine source of grief. "My dear," she said to me more than once when she must have been nearly eighty, "I do so love white hair! It is so much more becoming to an old face, and it is a great trouble to me that I have scarcely a white hair in my head—every one must think my hair is dyed." And it was true that the only thing which marred the charm of her gentle face was the dark hair looped on either side of her brow, which looked unnatural and robbed it of the softness of age.

Her sister, Lady Waterpark, for forty years lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria, lived close to us in Montagu Square with her daughter Susan. The latter had inherited the artistic genius of her grandmother, Lady Anson, who had been a pupil of Gains-

borough, and her sketches were very remarkable. She never used a pencil, but drew directly with the brush, so that her work had a peculiar clarity and freshness which a more laboured composition must have lacked. Her favourite subjects were scenes in the city, in which she depicted beautiful atmospheric effects produced by the softening medium of the smoke.

One night Susan took me to a horticultural fête at the Botanical Gardens, opened by the Duchess of Teck. Susan, who was in an old gown and did not want the trouble of having to be civil to royalty, spent most of the night dodging the Princess, in and out of the show. At length we were fairly caught in a tent from which there was no exit save by passing her, but still Susan was resourceful, and, seizing my hand, scrambled hurriedly up the bank at the back of the crowd. "She won't notice us up here in the bad light!" she said confidently; but the grass was slippery, and just at the crucial moment when the Duchess went past and Susan was ducking to keep out of sight, she lost her balance and, tobogganing ignominiously down the muddy bank, cannonaded into the Princess at its foot. "You seem to be having a merry evening!" said Princess Mary mischievously. Then she turned to me: "And whose dear little girl is this?" she asked.

Fanny Isted—always known to me as "Aunt Fanny"—had the vivacity and excitability which her sisters lacked. In the days of her youth, judging by a miniature which she once showed me, she must have been most lovely. The romance of her life was a curious one, for she early fell in love with Ambrose Isted, the last of his name in Northamptonshire, who was deaf and dumb. Her people objected to the match on account of his infirmity, and she became the wife of Charles Murray, Lord Mansfield's brother, who, in consequence of a malformation of the spine, was for many years an incurable invalid. Throughout the days of her beautiful young life, I have heard that Fanny nursed him devotedly; and at his death, Ambrose Isted having meanwhile married and become a widower, she wedded her first love.

Ecton Hall, Northamptonshire, where I used to stay with her, was a dear old house built of sepia-coloured stone, and flanked by a sunny old-fashioned garden. The tradition lingered that it had formerly been a nunnery, and one of the leafy pathways still bore the name of the Nuns' Walk, while occasionally among the flower-beds the gardeners dug up skulls and bones which looked as though a portion of the grounds had been a graveyard. But it was in the silent, dark alleys of the large shrubbery adjacent to it that the holy women were said to have paced telling their beads. Indeed, it was whispered that they still so wandered, and many a time when I ventured alone into the mysterious plantation, the solitude would seem to me to become peopled with the dead, so that, suddenly scared at the thought of the ghostly forms which I dreaded to

see gliding along with their rosaries, I have taken to my heels and never stopped till I found myself back again on the sunny lawn among the butterflies and flowers.

Child as I was, I soon learnt that Aunt Fanny, among many fine qualities, had one foible which in its sheer pointlessness was curious, but which she shared with many of her generation. She was rich, and, like others of her day, she considered that a certain amount of state was essential to a certain status. She would not, I think, have diminished her establishment by one unnecessary servant, nor have given up her carriage-and-pair even if unable to use it; yet, on principle, she always bargained assiduously over every halfpenny—indeed, the tradespeople knew this so well that they used to raise their prices when they saw her coming, as they felt she would never be satisfied unless she subsequently reduced whatever they asked. Moreover, she was economical for others as well as herself; through the many years when I visited her, whenever I left she always presented me with a packet of advertisements, the blank sides of which, she explained, could be used as writing-paper, and also with envelopes which had already been through the post, but which, having been opened with care, she pointed out could be used again, and had the additional advantage of being already addressed!

Her grandchildren by her first marriage, Daisy and Alice Murray, I used to see when they came from Perthshire. Their father, Charles Murray of Taymount, had married twice—first, Lady Adelaide Fielding, who died of scarlet fever at the birth of her youngest child; and, secondly, Blanche, daughter of Sir Thomas Moncrieff, and youngest of the five beautiful sisters of whom Georgina, Lady Dudley, was considered the handsomest. At Ecton the two little daughters of Lady Adelaide for the most part spent their lives in a sunless schoolroom doing lessons assiduously in preparation for a future which, for one of them, alas! never came; and when I think of them there comes back to me, like the ghostly notes of an old-time spinet, a song which we three used to sing in the evenings to the governess's playing—sing with the full strength of our young voices and a sentimental enjoyment of the suggested mystery and melancholy of life:

> "And when upon our foreheads the silver locks shall fall,
> Or early comes the Shadow which comes alike to all. . . ."

We had no very clear idea what was implied by the "Shadow" about which we sang heartily, and one day I asked Alice what she thought it meant.

"I expect it means Death—or some humbug of that sort!" she said gaily. "I wonder on which of us three it will fall first!" The end of life seemed so very far away then—a matter for incredulity, almost for jest—in those days of its beginning.

V

To revert to Bryanston Square: opposite to us was our twin house—the Turkish Embassy, then occupied by Musurus Pasha; and I used to be told the tragic story of his wife's death. When the Sultan was visiting England, the Pasha had to entertain him, and one night at a ball in his honour, Madame Musurus was taken in to supper by the Sultan. She was stout, and her dress, according to the fashion of those days, was very tight, and the Sultan walked too fast for her. She could not ask him to slacken his pace, and suddenly she collapsed in a faint and died. Mademoiselle Musurus used subsequently to do the honours at the Embassy, and I can still see her exercising vigorously round and round the Square, followed by her pug-dogs, while my mother used to remark regretfully how handsome she would have looked in Turkish costume. Musurus was succeeded as Ambassador by Rustem Bey, a pathetic-looking little man who was always very delicate.

Another tragic story connected with the Square was as follows. The treasurer at that date was a Captain Storey, a genial bachelor who loved society, and lived with an elderly sister who was a lively gossip, and who amongst the irreverent went by the name of "the old, old Story." He had called one day to bring us a song of his own composition, when my father invited him nearer the fire, but he edged away. He then told us that there was a curious fatality in his family. His own mother and others of his near relations had been burnt to death at different times and from varying accidents, so that he had a dread, which his sister shared, of being overtaken by the same fate. "We both have a horror of fire," he said; "we exercise every precaution—fire-guards, safety-lamps, and we scarcely venture on the hearth-rug; but it will get us in the end!" Some time after he was ill, and while reading in bed he must have fallen asleep, and his mattress become ignited, for we were told that he was found dead, burnt past recognition. I never heard particulars of Miss Storey's fate, but the disaster which she dreaded likewise overtook her, and she too was eventually burnt to death.

We had, however, not merely an enemy to fire, but to water, in the Square. Close to our house was a pump from a well which produced a clear, sparkling beverage, cold as ice. Before meal-times, numbers of footmen used to be seen going with jugs from the various houses, as every one was anxious to get the cool, delicious drink. By and by came a public analyst, who pronounced the water highly dangerous, and the Government caused the spring to be closed up. People were all very indignant, as they had been drinking it for years with no ill-effects.

One event which I remember hearing discussed was the visit of the Shah of Persia to Dorchester House. My mother told me how his attendants used to appear in the Park occasionally

riding on wonderfully painted horses, and how she saw a man wearing a diamond fez cantering up the Row on a cream-coloured Arab adorned with brilliant pink and black spots like a rocking-horse. The Shah, being a strict Moslem, ate no animal food which was not killed on the premises by his own people, and the mess in which Dorchester House was found after his departure was indescribable. Many were the stories in connection with his visit which lingered, most of them illustrative of his Oriental treatment of his attendants. For instance, when shown over St. Paul's, on learning the altitude at which he was standing, he at once, as a diversion, ordered some of his entourage to precipitate themselves into the street below, and was much annoyed when this exhibition was prevented by his being informed that it was contrary to the usage of this country, and would give offence.

Another tale, which was probably apocryphal, was in connection with his visit to Hatfield. It was said that on his departure he expressed himself through his interpreter extremely satisfied with his entertainment, and therefore he wished untold good fortune to his host; adding, with a wave of his hand towards the place where stood Lady Salisbury and her sister: "Next time I come, I trust you will have a younger and a prettier harem!"

I have a vivid recollection of hearing echoes of the famous Tichborne trial, in which I took a keen interest, because I possessed a toy commemorative of it. This was a miniature see-saw, on one side of which was seated the Claimant and on the other the opposing Counsel, balanced by bulky money-bags. Although the trial, like the Shah's visit, took place before my day, the pros and cons of the case continued to form the subject-matter of many heated discussions, and as my father had been asked to be Counsel for the Claimant, I heard considerable controversy about it. It is the fashion now to dismiss the *cause célèbre* with a laugh at the gullibility of a generation which was so long in convicting a transparent impostor; but that was not the opinion of those who were present in Court during the trial, and my father often commented on the abnormally baffling nature of the case, since whatever evidence was adduced on one side seemed to be immediately discredited by counter-evidence on the other.

It was principally on account of his own uncertainty in regard to the true identity of the man that my father declined the brief, for he said that had he embarked upon it and then found out that the Claimant was a rogue, he could not have gone through with it; but I have heard also that he predicted from the first that, right or wrong, the alleged Sir Roger would never be allowed to succeed, as there was too much money against him. My father, however, had all the private papers connected with the case sent to him and went into the evidence very thoroughly, discussing it with Chief Justice Bovill and Sir J. Coleridge. He also had many personal talks

with the Claimant, and he always mentioned as one curious feature of the case that, while the man's abnormal stoutness was conducive to vulgarity of appearance, it was, on the contrary, impossible to be in his presence and not feel that you were talking to a man who was a gentleman by birth. He had a singularly refined voice, and his manners were essentially not those of the son of a butcher at Wapping who had known nothing better than the rough existence of Tom Castro. What impressed my father still more was that the Claimant was a far from clever man, and seemed totally unfitted to sustain the part of an astute villain who for so long could keep at bay some of the finest intellects in England. Admittedly he was illiterate, but then so had been the real Roger, who was of meagre intelligence, could not spell correctly, was addicted to drink, and had always preferred the companionship of stablemen to that of his equals.

I have only a dim recollection to go by, but I understood that my father considered the fault of the prosecution later was attempting to make out that the man was Arthur Orton when he was obviously not. To enumerate only a few particulars—Arthur Orton was taller than the Claimant by half an inch, *while still growing*; he had enormous hands and feet; light hair and light blue eyes; he was marked by small-pox; he was tattooed on both arms and his ears were pierced; he had been vaccinated at Wapping; he had no scars on his body, and above all, according to the evidence of all his family, he had no physical malformation. The Claimant, on the contrary, was a shorter man; he had remarkably small hands and feet; he had dark hair—almost black—and dark blue eyes; he had no tattoo marks; no small-pox marks; his ears had never been pierced; he had French vaccination marks (Roger had been vaccinated in Paris); he had certain scars upon his body identical with those Roger was known to have possessed, and he had an unusual physical malformation common, however, in the Tichborne family. It was this last fact which made Mr. Lush tell my father privately that he was convinced that the man, if not the real Roger, was unquestionably a Tichborne.

Another curious point my father was interested in was the story of the signet ring. Roger had been given a ring by his mother which had a red stone engraved with the Tichborne coat of arms—a hind's head with wings. This ring the Claimant told my father he had sold to a pawnbroker in Melbourne when he landed there destitute after the loss of the *Bella* in 1854. "If you could produce that ring," said my father, "that would settle the case." He did not personally give much credence to the Claimant's explanation of why the ring was not in his possession, and by and by a Court of Law and an Act of Parliament decreed that the ring and the man who had worn it were both at the bottom of the Atlantic.

But, strangely enough, the ring was afterwards discovered on

the finger of a clerk in the Government Offices at Melbourne; inside it was engraved the name of Roger Tichborne's mother, and the clerk said he had bought it cheap from a pawnbroker in Melbourne!

Yet to the last the mystery remained unsolved, with its baffling contradictory evidence. Again and again in the course of the trial the Claimant mentioned incidents and conversations which had taken place between the real Roger when alone with some other person, in which it was proved up to the hilt that no impostor could have been coached. Again and again arose other incidents respecting which the man's memory was a blank in regard to facts that it was difficult to believe the real Roger could have forgotten. Here is one which did not come out in Court:

A friend was out riding with Roger one day, when the latter tried to leap a dyke and fell into the water up to his neck in green slime. He was rescued with difficulty, and with many concomitant circumstances which were calculated to stamp the occurrence on his recollection. When the Claimant was being tried, this man went to see him, and the alleged Roger at once hailed him as an old friend. "'Ow are you?" he said, warmly extending his hand.

"Wait a minute," said the man; "before I shake hands with you, I want to know, do you remember going a ride with me——?"

"Perfectly, perfectly," said the Claimant.

"Do you remember what happened during that ride?"

Dead silence on the part of the Claimant; and his interlocutor turned on his heels and marched off.

Interested as I had always been in hearing about the famous trial, I was walking one day along Shouldham Street, not far from Bryanston Square, when I came upon a crowd, and, inquiring the cause, I was told that the funeral of "Sir Roger Tichborne" was taking place. In front of a little lodging-house a hearse and several funeral coaches were drawn up, and in a few moments the coffin was borne out—a very handsome coffin with bright fittings, and with the name "Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, Baronet," engraved upon it. The curious thing was that in the window of an undertaker's adjacent was exhibited another coffin bearing a similar legend, which had been prepared by another undertaker for the same funeral—it was said that both were provided by different firms gratis as advertisements—but that, owing to some disagreement, the first was not accepted. Even in death the Claimant seemed to have provision made for a dual personality, while further food for comment might be found in the fact that the man who was said to have duped so large a number of his fellow-men departed this life on April 1st!

Into the first mourning coach stepped his wife, a woman of prepossessing appearance, and several well-dressed mourners followed. Meanwhile in the streets hawkers were selling reprints of the alleged "Confession" made by the Claimant in 1885 in *The*

People, together with his recantation of it. He had, he asserted, been forced to sign it under the promise of a sum of money in a moment of dire want when he was faced with actual starvation. As the funeral drove away, a man near me, looking after it, observed: "Well, whatever 'e was, 'e wasn't Arthur Orton—that I *do* know!"

Only one other echo of my father's professional life remains with me. I recall his telling me an episode in Court which I believe subsequently became classical as a "chestnut." A poor woman was one day describing her poverty-stricken state and how she lived principally on bread and tea, when my father from the Bench observed: "But, my good woman, don't you know that tea is slow poison?": "It must be that, your Honour," she replied, "for I have lived on it these fifty years!"

My father at Eton was contemporary with, and the great friend of, William Ewart Gladstone, but divergence in politics afterwards severed the friendship. Party feeling still ran high, and in the nursery we learnt that the leader of the Liberal faction was synonymous with the Evil One from whom we prayed to be delivered. Many were the tales, however, which I used to hear about "Dizzy" and his wife, for although the latter died in 1872, her reputation lived after her in a series of quaint but appreciative anecdotes. In one of my grandmother's letters I find a description of her meeting Mrs. Disraeli, as she then was, "dressed in pink satin, with a wreath of roses in her hair, although she must be near fifty!"—youthful attire which now would arouse no comment. Long before the days of Disraeli's fame, Bulwer Lytton, the novelist, drew up the horoscope of the future statesman with singular accuracy; but Lord Lytton was accredited by some with the practice of black magic; and a guest who once slept in the room he had occupied declared that the walls became luminous and that horrible objects appeared in the midst of the luminosity!—a result which pretty Jane, on hearing the tale, described as "delirium trimmings."

One story, however, which Mrs. Disraeli herself used to be fond of telling, is certainly remarkable, and I may add that besides relating it to my mother, she told it to her great friend, Lady Knatchbull, of "The Hatch," whose daughter, Mrs. Dundas, recently corroborated my recollection of it.

Mrs. Disraeli said that she was sitting one day in her drawing-room dozing over a book, when suddenly she woke up, and with startling vividness saw before her the vision of a cupboard in the kitchen with a sinister-looking man crouching in it. So extraordinarily clear was the vision, and such uneasiness did it occasion her, that at last, feeling ashamed of her own folly, she rang the bell for the footman, and inquired if there was any strange man at that moment in the kitchen. The footman assured her that there was no stranger on the premises at all.

Still unable to rid herself of the impression created by this extraordinary incident, she could not rest, and at last she determined to do a thing she had never done—to go down to the kitchen in the middle of the afternoon. She did so, to the surprise of the servants, who, in answer to her inquiries, again assured her that there could be no man hiding anywhere on the premises. Suddenly, as she was questioning them, she noticed a cupboard she had never observed before in the wall high up above a dresser, and she recognized it as the cupboard she had seen in her vision. "What is that cupboard?" she asked the cook. "Oh, that is a cupboard we never use," was the reply, "it is too high up." "Bring a ladder and open it," said Mrs. Disraeli. They did so, and within, crouching in his hiding-place, they found the man just as she had seen him in her moment of clairvoyance, waiting till the household should have gone to bed, when he could come forth and find all clear for his projected burglary.

VI

I may here perhaps mention a less remarkable experience of my own. I have before given an instance of the strange flashes of premonition which used to come suddenly to me in my childhood, and it has often appeared to me that children, whose undeveloped minds may be in closer touch with Nature, are possessed of some faculty which gets blunted in after-life, but which enables them to "sense" danger much as animals feel a vague alarm at an approaching storm. Be that as it may, I cannot account for my experience, which, in view of its sequel, made a deep impression on me.

The first August which we spent in our new home came in with almost tropical heat, and my father, waiting for the Long Vacation, suggested running down to Dover for the week-end; but my mother at the last moment did not accompany him, as I was unwell.

I was sitting at the top of the house when I heard the bell ring, which announced that the carriage was at the door to drive my father to the station. I was not troubling about his departure, because I knew that he proposed to return in forty-eight hours, when, abruptly, there came over me a panic so sudden and overwhelming that it seemed to stop my breath and clutch at my heart-strings. I jumped up and rushed out of the room, afraid of I knew not what, but crying frantically to myself: "I must see him—I *must* see him before he goes!" I ran at break-neck speed down the long staircase, and I could feel the tears streaming down my cheeks as I went, while I was obsessed by an awful dread that I should be too late. I arrived speechless at the hall door just as he was getting into the carriage, but directly he saw me he turned and hurried back.

"What is the matter, my little pet? What a breathless little woman!" he said, evidently surprised at my excitement.

"I wanted to say good-bye!" I said incoherently—apologetically, for I felt it was impossible to explain my folly.

"And I shall be back again before you have done saying it—God bless you!" he said, as he kissed me and ran laughing down the steps. I never saw him again.

The tragedy which ensued had about it an added element of distress which I did not learn till I was older. On the following Monday, feeling revived by the sea air, he decided to stay away one day longer. After luncheon he ordered a carriage to go for a drive, but he had barely got outside the town when he called out to the driver to return as he felt ill, adding, in surprise, "I felt quite well when I started." On arriving at the hotel, they found he was dead; and then followed a scene on which it is not pleasant to dwell. Although my father had been a well-known visitor there for many years, the Manager refused to take in his body for fear of any panic among the other guests, and for hours the driver wandered about Dover, not knowing what to do with his tragic burden. Thus when my unhappy mother arrived in response to a telegram, for long she could not trace where they had taken the body.

A week later, Lord Grimthorpe wrote to her. "There is one thing I feel I ought to tell you. Four days before your husband went to Dover, I met him in the street, and by a curious coincidence our conversation turned on the question of sudden death, and he said: 'There is one thing that I always trust I may be spared, and that is a lingering illness. I love life as much as any man, but I am ready to go whenever my time may come, and there is one prayer I have never been able to say—and that is the prayer against sudden death.'"

At the date when he died my father had agreed to accept a peerage, and as a prospective Judge of the High Court he was expecting a substantial increase of income, therefore he had placed a large sum of money in a lock-up investment, believing that he personally would not require it, and it would enrich his children. But owing to his unexpected demise at this juncture, with a large sum sunk in this fashion, and part of the money in Trust, my mother found herself financially embarrassed, especially in view of the fact that the workmen from a most expensive firm had been in the house for over eighteen months before we moved in, and even the long lease of the house was not yet paid for. However, she was persistently assured by one of the heads of that firm, that there was no occasion for her to trouble about anything. This man, Mr. C., a clever architect, who had fawned on my father during his lifetime, now came, in apparently disinterested fashion, to offer his sympathy to my mother, and to smoothe away all difficulties and anxiety

for her at a time when she was totally unfit to attend to business.

Then one day pretty Jane, whom I have before spoken of, was strolling down Oxford Street, when she heard someone mention my mother's name. She looked round and perceived Mr. C. and another man in earnest conversation ; so, since they did not know her by sight, she slackened her steps, and, apparently staring at the shop-windows, played the part of eavesdropper. "It is an excellent bit of good-fortune for us," she heard Mr. C. remark. "Mrs. Pickering is much too ill to follow business, and if we just let everything run on at an exorbitant rate of interest, by and by we can foreclose, and the house and everything will fall into our hands."

Pretty Jane had heard sufficient. She went home with her information ; and I do not know how my mother managed—I presume she used her personal money—but within forty-eight hours the firm which Mr. C. so ably represented, to their disgust, received a cheque defraying every penny which was owing to them.

Percival Andree Pickering
Ætat 12.

Anna Maria Wilhelmina Pickering
(*née* Spencer-Stanhope).

Percival Andree Pickering, Q.C.

CHAPTER IV

Cranford Redivivus

I

MY father's death coming thus abruptly into the trivial joys and sorrows of those early days, seemed to sever sharply the life which preceded it from all the days which followed after.

Throughout the stifling heat of that tropical August, and amid the melancholy conditions in my home, my strength flagged visibly, and I was sent off hurriedly to Yorkshire to stay with my great-aunts, the Misses Spencer-Stanhope, sisters to the "General" whom I have before referred to.

In a previous publication I have described these ladies in the days of their gay youth, when, after their own father's death, they lived with their widowed mother in a large house—now extinct—in Langham Place, and were the centre of a social life as brilliant as it was exclusive. Typical fine ladies of their generation, well born, ultra-fashionable in dress and mannerisms, highly educated, with large fortunes at their command, they gave themselves prodigious airs, and scintillated in their particular coterie with great effect; but I have heard it hinted that their somewhat acrid wit and caustic tongues made them more feared than beloved among their contemporaries. Perhaps on this account only one of them married—Marianne, the eldest; and in my day only two survived—the two youngest, Frances and Maria.

When I knew these last, their brilliant youth belonged to an unimaginable Past, and they had developed the eccentricities and the prejudices of age. To their nieces they were known as "the Aunts," to the villagers and servants as "the Ladies"; in my mind soon grew a conviction that there could be no other real aunts or other real ladies in existence. Aunt Frances was tall and stately, with two rows of silver-white curls on either side of a fine brow; and she still retained very evident traces of the face and form which had won her recognition as a noted beauty at the Court of George IV. Aunt Maria was small and dapper, and so thin that her head looked like a vivacious skull. She usually carried her teeth in the pocket of her black satin apron, and put them in, leisurely and without embarrassment, when visitors were announced. The especial rôle of Aunt Frances was to enunciate her individual views on all matters—social, religious, and political, and this with

a decisiveness that brooked no dissent. Aunt Maria enacted the part of Greek Chorus.

The life at Banks, although so short a time ago in actual years, is a page of bygone history already curious and unbelievable. In those days when motors were unknown, and bicycles of fantastic shape were impracticable on the rough Yorkshire roads, it was a little world to itself, and a world of which the isolation was complete. The house was approached by an avenue over half a mile in length, bordered with thick holly-hedges on either side. The carts and cattle going to a farm beyond had the right of way to their destination, with the result that in winter the drive, ploughed up into great ruts, with its damp overhanging trees and its beautiful but dank bushes, never dried, and, inches-deep in mud, became a veritable Slough of Despond. When one had courageously waded to the end of its gloomy depths, one emerged only on to two lonely roads; still no habitation was in sight. To-day motors would flash over the distance in a few seconds; but then, to catch the sound of a human voice, to see the smoke from a human habitation, meant a lengthy, dreary walk over mud-caked roads, with the depressing knowledge of a return necessarily along the same solitary route, weighted by an unsightly proportion of the Yorkshire soil adhering to one's weary feet.

The house itself stood on the summit of an incline whence the windows looked out over a wide, park-like pasture-land. This undulated downwards for about a quarter of a mile, then rose again on the opposite side in a steep ascent. In the little valley at the foot of these hills, known locally as Banks Bottoms, ran a tiny stream, rippling over wet pebbles, forming miniature waterfalls, and drifting, a mysterious silver streak, beneath thickly intersecting undergrowth. But from the hills this was invisible; and as the water at its widest was but a few feet across, there seemed a touch of ironical humour in suggesting that the house, a quarter of a mile away, stood on the " banks " of that gutter-like, insignificant rivulet.

In summer-time browsing cattle were dotted sparsely on the hills, and the hinted presence of a bull in their midst made the rash wayfarer pause before tempting his fate where the land afforded so few opportunities for taking cover. A story ran that a clergyman's daughter venturing that way when going for a week-end visit near the village of Silkstone, was chivied by this inconsiderate brute and made good her escape only by dropping her modest luggage, which the bull paused to demolish. And half an hour after—so the tale finished—the bull was seen majestically grazing, his horns adorned with the remains of a battered trunk and specimens of lady's underwear which need not be particularized.

Foot-passengers, however, were few, and in winter even the

cattle vanished from the landscape. Then, when the snow fell, that wide space of solitary land presented a dazzling sheet of unbroken whiteness, as blinding to the sight as it was depressing to the spirits. Far as the eye could reach, no living thing stirred. An icy wind seemed to blow direct from the moors many miles away. It moaned eerily round the lonely house like a soul in pain ; and to-day never can I hear the wind howling without the old sense of isolation, of an intense loneliness, creeping over me so that I want to rush away into the midst of a crowd and feel humanity once more around me. . . .

II

Within doors the fine old Jacobean dwelling was a beautiful place, though then crammed with an incongruous mixture of furniture. Victorian monstrosities jostled priceless old oak, and the accumulated belongings of many generations—rubbish and treasures —were intermingled. The history of the house was itself somewhat remarkable.

For many decades it had represented a Naboth's vineyard to my forbears, standing as it did in the midst of their estates but not forming part of their property. At length their opportunity came. The owners, an old Yorkshire family of the name of Green, went on the Grand Tour, and mysteriously disappeared, swallowed up, it was presumed, in the French Revolution. After a time my grandfather succeeded in purchasing the property, but he always said in jest that some day the ghosts of the Greens would appear from the tomb and dispute his title-deeds.

Long years afterwards, when the house was let to the Wortleys for the summer, a woman forced her way into the hall, where she took up her position and refused to be ejected. She said the place belonged to her and that she was not going to be turned out of her own house. All remonstrances were futile, and at length the police were sent for, who gently but firmly removed her to the Barnsley Infirmary. She proved to be a harmless lunatic, a poor villager, who could never even have heard of the former owners of the place, now dead and gone for a century-and-a-half. Yet —here was the strange coincidence in view of her hallucination— her name was found to be Green !

Banks, as the dower-house of Cannon Hall, proved something of a white elephant to my grandfather, who, thinking to make it less unwieldy to let, rashly pulled down a whole storey. But the rooms which remained were lofty and of noble proportions, the panelling was fine, and the spacious hall, with its massive oak pillars, led to a staircase of inlaid oak almost unique in beauty, with a carved oak balustrade which was continued along the corridors overhead. In my aunts' time the staircase was kept so highly polished that one walked on it as on a sheet of ice, and

to all who wore heels on their shoes it was forbidden to step upon its shining surface. Thereby also hangs a tale.

At a later date, when the Ladies had become more feeble and no longer had any use for that slippery way, my mother, about to issue forth one day for a walk, espied two queer-looking, frock-coated strangers approaching the house. The "Banks ladies" were known far and near for their indiscriminate charity, and something in the gait, the garments, and the semi-clerical appearance of the visitors seemed to proclaim that they were on begging bent. My mother fled upstairs, leaving instructions with the butler to say she was "not at home"; but having arrived at the safe concealment of the upper landing, curiosity overcame her, and she leant over to listen to the colloquy in the hall below. In a moment, like a former misadventure of Susan Cavendish, she had lost her footing on the gleaming boards, and, subsiding involuntarily into a sitting position, she slid rapidly downwards. The missionaries below—for such they were—were suddenly amazed by the sight of an elderly lady of respectable appearance tobogganing frivolously down the beautiful staircase, till she landed with a plump at their feet. They rushed forward to pick her up—she was speechless with laughter—and the subscription which they craved was a foregone conclusion.

But this is anticipating events. In the days when I first went to Banks, my aunts still ascended and descended that shining stairway in a life of orderly routine. Everything in the house went by line and rule. Each moment of each day was mapped out into its appointed employment, which never varied: prayers, correspondence, crochet, politics, novel-reading—even a little game in the evening had its apportioned time. It was the life of a nunnery with a strong admixture of worldliness. It was the life of Cranford, but on a higher social scale and without the little amenities and frivolities which fluttered the hearts of that gentle community, and made of their days a mild orgie of tea-parties and absorbing gossip.

A sad little child, with my heart aching for the father I was never more to see, and the home from which I was temporarily banished, the atmosphere at Banks seemed to stifle me. I fought unconsciously against its deadly miasma, but all in vain. I, too, slipped into my appointed place in that daily round of iron-bound conventions and hidebound convictions, which was to hold me in its grip all my young days, varying only as Time wrought its measured, imperceptible changes.

III

At first I was sent to breakfast in the housekeeper's room with the upper servants; a nine-o'clock breakfast was considered to be too late for a child. Then, indeed, came my great opportunity.

I was dispatched to the drawing-room to practise on the piano, and with praiseworthy diligence I ran the fingers of one hand up and down the notes in interminable scales, while with the other I held between the pages of my music-book some volume of the many novels which my aunts had down from Mudie's and which I devoured greedily. I received great praise for my industry, and I thoroughly enjoyed that hour; though from time to time I cast a nervous glance at the doorway, lest by some evil chance this forbidden taste of the Tree of Knowledge should be discovered. . . .

And as I write there rises before me a vivid picture of the room on which my gaze then fell. Outside the three tall windows is a wet lawn enshrouded in dark, overgrown laurels. Within, a promiscuous sea of chairs and sofas is grouped round a large centre-table, on which books are deposited in neat couples in a neat circle. And just as at Cranford newspaper pathways were employed to ward off the damaging rays of the sun, so at Banks everything seems covered by something else to preserve it. The carpet is carefully concealed under a large white crumb-cloth; each writing-table has a layer of newspaper to protect the leather; each ornament has a mat to prevent its scratching the surface on which it stands; each needlework chair is covered with pink-and-white striped chintz, and this in turn is adorned with a large muslin antimacassar, frilled and calico-lined, to protect the chintz. Even the footstool has its enveloping petticoat of pink and white; and some of the "best" pictures are concealed beneath a deep flounce of green silk suspended from a rod.

Long years afterwards a cousin confided to me that she had always believed that these pictures must be of an improper nature which the Aunts felt it imperative to conceal from the public eye. So one day, when left alone in the room, she peeped eagerly behind a flounce, and to her disappointment found only a harmless landscape mildewing for want of air and daylight.

In the same spirit, if any visitor ever marred the spotless whiteness of the crumb-cloth, or sacrilegiously deposited on it stray chunks of mud from the avenue, no sooner did the door close behind them than Aunt Maria would race distractedly to the fireplace for the shovel and tongs and nimbly remove all traces of such a misadventure.

For there were three things excluded from the pink-chintz drawing-room—sunshine, draughts, and any token of wear-and-tear.

But my peaceful hour there came all too quickly to an end and I was summoned to the dining-room to read aloud to Aunt Frances the Lesson for the day. I can see with equal vividness that pretty oak-panelled room, with a Peter Lely picture of a lady in blue inset over the fireplace. There were four great windows, but two always remained shuttered—my Aunts said on account of

the glare, yet in my heart I believed it was because the butler and the housemaid had both refused to open them, so the Ladies saved their dignity by discovering The Glare. Be that as it may, while Aunt Frances and I, seated by the fire, peered dimly at our Bibles, which we knew by heart, each day the same curious circumstance struck me with reawakened interest.

For by some arrangement known only to herself, Aunt Maria's allotted chapter for that hour was an entirely different chapter to the one allocated to Aunt Frances. I rather suspect that Aunt Maria read the Bible straight through "on her own," and having raced to Revelations, started breathlessly again at Genesis without regard to the more languid routine prescribed by the Church. Whatever the explanation, each morning she stood by the hissing urn with her Bible poised on the tea-caddy, her magnifying-glass in hand, muttering over her especial chapter audibly, as though fearful lest her attention should be distracted by what I was reading to Aunt Frances and that she should inadvertently hear what, for her, was the wrong chapter for that particular hour. She read with much dramatic action of the head, laying enormous emphasis on all the unimportant words. And during the process, while my lips mechanically framed the sentences expected from them, my attention involuntarily strayed towards the tea-caddy, fascinated by the lure of her antics.

By and by the prayer-bell rang, and we paced into the hall where the servants stood assembled in an orderly row. Not one was ever missing. If any of the household had dared to be absent, comment, investigation and admonition would have followed. . . . During the breakfast which ensued, and to which as I grew older I was promoted, one incident never failed to rivet my attention. Aunt Frances liked to taste an egg, but she did not require an entire egg. So at a given moment in the meal Aunt Maria used to rise from her seat, pace round the table as though taking part in a religious procession, and place her half-eaten egg in front of Aunt Frances. Aunt Frances used then to take two spoonfuls of yolk from it, and return it to Aunt Maria, who forthwith paced silently back to her seat and finished what remained.

Immediately after breakfast came the most solemn moment of the day. The Post-bag, of which Aunt Frances as Head of the House guarded the key, was ceremoniously opened by her. This was not an event to be hurried over or treated lightly. One by one the letters were extracted from its depths; each in turn was subjected to a close scrutiny; comments were made on the post-mark, the autograph, and futile speculations were hazarded respecting its possible contents, ere it was finally delivered to its rightful owner.

On the departure of the Bag for the outgoing post, this ceremony was reversed, Aunt Frances finally locking up the contents with

equal solemnity. She never discovered that the old butler, Wright, had a duplicate key, and extracted from the Bag before it was brought to her, or popped into it after it had been closed by her, any letters which it was not thought desirable for her to inspect.

After the thrill of opening the Bag, a certain flatness fell upon the day. Morning was the time for Duty unadulterated by Pleasure; and when the second Lesson for the day had been read, Aunt Frances proceeded to deal elegantly with her correspondence, while Aunt Maria retired to her own sitting-room, and became immersed in accounts. Maria was the Cinderella of that family of two, and to her fell the drudgery of keeping the house-books. Hour after hour she sat laboriously totting up rows of neat figures while, with uncanny perverseness, the whole totalled a different amount each time that she reached the foot of a column. Her days were indescribably saddened by these discrepancies, and I have known her make herself quite ill over the deficit or the excess of a halfpenny when this proved impossible of explanation. But in similar fashion she would expend hours trying wearily to untie an obdurate bit of string without reflecting how little it cost to replace the missing halfpenny or the knotted twine, while the time thus wasted no money could buy.

Before midday both Aunts retired to their rooms for silent prayer. When they issued forth again, another great event of the day took place. Aunt Frances OPENED *The Times*. Thenceforward, as became a staunch Tory, the iniquities of Mr. Gladstone filled her thoughts and stirred her eloquence; and this topic lasted throughout luncheon. "Mr. Gladstone," I have heard her announce more than once, "is the Anti-Christ. I have *proved* it from Holy Writ." And Aunt Maria, in a voice which had sunk to a deep bass from the depth of her conviction, would echo darkly: "He was to come in the Latter Days."

But at times during that meal a diversion did occur. The dishes, according to the fashion of that date, were set upon the table and "helped" by whoso sat at the head and the foot. Every day at Banks there were two sweets, usually a tart, placed in front of Aunt Frances by her right of seniority, and a humbler milky pudding placed in front of Aunt Maria. If I followed my inclination, and, in answer to an inquiry from Aunt Frances, said that I would like some tart, there would come an ominous sniff from her, followed by a homily on the luxury of the rising generation and how this was the certain sign of the speedy downfall of a nation. If I thought I would please her and said I should like some milky pudding, which I loathed, there would come an equally portentous sniff from Aunt Maria. "Mrs. Little (the cook)," she would observe in reproachful accents, "*thought* you would like some tart. She will be *disappointed*." Then if, in desperation, I tried to please both, and said I would have tart and pudding together, there

would follow a duet of warnings against greediness: "We should have thought *one* thing was sufficient at your age. When *we* were young we were brought up so much more simply. The young should learn to practise self-denial," etc., etc.

But occasionally the climax was reached. "Selina," quoth Aunt Frances, referring to a sister-in-law who lived in another county, "never allowed her daughter Mary to touch any sweets till she was grown up. Mary never ate anything but milky puddings; and at tea, if she reached out her hand to take a bit of cake, Selina would rap upon the table and say: 'Mary! Mary! You are forgetting yourself!' And look what a beautiful complexion Mary has got!"

How I hated Mary's complexion, and wished I could forget her as she nearly forgot herself, till one day resentment got the better of prudence, and, figuratively speaking, I pounced on Mary's hair. True, it was very pretty hair, but it was fair, and to me it presented the one vulnerable point, like the heel of Achilles, which might serve my purpose.

"Aunt Frances," I remonstrated hotly, "Mary—or Seraphina, as *I* call her—has carroty hair, so of course she has a skin to match. My hair isn't carroty, and all the milky puddings in the world won't make it so!"

That time arose a duet with a vigour which left me crushed beneath the knowledge that I had fallen into the most reprehensible crime which it was possible for youth to commit. For had I not argued with my elders? Had I not been pert? And worse, had I not been untruthful?—for Seraphina's hair was *not* red!

Luncheon was thus not a period of unmitigated enjoyment, and when it was over, on the days when neither a drive nor gardening was practicable, Aunt Frances continued studying the iniquities of Mr. Gladstone till a fixed hour, when she permitted herself to turn to the three-volume novels which, all unknown to her, her godless niece had devoured at cock-crow. So doing I think she suffered a qualm of conscience, for what was pleasant must needs, in some subtle way, be wicked, and she more than once announced that Burke and the Bible should suffice to any well-disciplined female—for was not one the guide to this world and the other to the next?

But Aunt Maria did not allow herself any relaxation till after tea. Throughout the long winter afternoons she stood by a what-not in one of the windows, a patient, upright figure, making garments for the poor. She said she could not see well if she sat down. Even when nearly eighty she stood there daily from two to five. She had been delicate all her life, and sometimes she looked very tired, but all remonstrances were received with an acerbity which nipped them in the bud. I think the underlying idea was that physical discomfort in this world ensured heavenly bliss in the

next. So her days were spent mortifying the flesh, and occasionally, it must be admitted, mortifying other people.

After tea, life became more frivolous. As we sat in the dusk waiting till the servants brought candles, my Aunts sometimes asked each other riddles of which each knew the answer. Two of these I remember:

Q. When the rain comes down from heaven, what goes up from the earth?

A. Umbrellas.

Q. When the dawn breaks, where do the pieces go?

A. Into mo(u)rning.

With the coming of lights, Aunt Maria sometimes opened a packet of booklets from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to which she subscribed, and read with absorbed interest, *How Susan lost her First Place* and similar fiction, at intervals treating the company to choice extracts, read aloud with much dramatic action. Sometimes I was told off to play with her a game of Go-Bang; but my Aunts had an ineradicable conviction that it was impertinent in the young to beat their elders. So Aunt Frances would stand like a Guardian Angel behind Aunt Maria watching the progress of the contest, and when I was about to win by one of the crooked traps laid for the unwary, she—while I boiled with impotent fury—would exclaim, "*Skew-gaws! Skew-gaws!*" and put Maria upon her guard.

With the ringing of the dressing-bell a wonderful transformation scene took place. In winter the Aunts would go upstairs, a bundle of thick wraps—I have known Aunt Maria, when the weather was cold, wear as many as five woollen cross-overs and thick shawls swathed about her spare person. But no matter what the temperature, at the sound of that magic bell all superfluous clothing was discarded with impunity. Down they came to dinner in dresses of gossamer texture, with filmy lace scarves about their shoulders, square necks and elbow-sleeves. They had an inexhaustible wardrobe, and each night they seemed to appear in a different dress. Some of these garments, which had been fashionable half a century before, were exceedingly pretty—dainty black or grey muslins powdered with little floral sprigs; flowered brocades, beflounced to the waist; quaintly frilled bodices; fantastic sleeves. They wore, too, strange old-world ornaments, twinkling trinkets fashioned ingeniously out of the hair of dead relations, mounted in gold and diamonds; velvet bracelets and neckbands; miniatures as lockets; head-dresses of obsolete design. Aunt Maria, indeed, jauntily sported a circlet about her brow like the wreath of a Roman victor, only it usually consisted of salmon-coloured velvet twisted over a stuffing of cotton-wool.

Occasionally they exhibited as a curiosity ornaments which had a yet greater attraction for me. In the far-away days of their

girlhood they had learnt how to make wonderful necklaces and brooches out of bread. The bread was kneaded for hours, then it was shaped into a design with classical figures showing in an open lozenge. The lozenges were next knit together by links all kneaded ingeniously in the same manner, and the whole, when completed, was painted black. It was then subjected to some process which left it as hard as iron and with the appearance of being oxidized, so that no one not initiated into the origin of these ornaments would ever imagine they were not metal. As a treat I was allowed to examine them, till one day I tactlessly asked if it was necessary to have very dirty hands in order to impart to the bread that peculiar blackened hue, and subsequently the bread-necklaces were shown to me no more.

IV

On Sunday evenings I was allowed down to dessert, and I was given a large volume of *Good Words* to peruse till the crucial moment arrived when I, too, took my part in the ceremonious meal by eating an allowance of almonds and raisins. I did not greatly enjoy this dissipation save for the sense of importance which it conveyed. Throughout the courses, as throughout luncheon, Aunt Frances enunciated her opinions, and Aunt Maria obediently echoed them. I remember one day, when there had been news in the papers of a great gale which had partially wrecked the recently lengthened pier at Dover, Aunt Frances expounded the true inwardness of the disaster. "It was very presumptuous of Man," she pronounced indignantly, "to build so long a pier; and he has rightly had his pride chastened by the Almighty." My attention diverted from *Good Words*, I puzzled over the situation—*why* should a few feet more or less of pier in the sea rouse the ire of the Deity? "But, Aunt Frances," I said, "I thought the pier was to protect ships. Isn't knocking it down like that a bit *spiteful*?" Then, as I saw her expression, anxious to placate her, but misled by a sequence of ideas, I added soothingly: "But, after all, it's much what happened at the *Tower of Babble*!"

To Aunt Frances, however, all innovations bore the impress of the Cloven Hoof. "Railways are an invention of the Evil One!" she used to announce when other topics failed; and I thought she might be right, only I did wish he had brought one nearer Banks. Another conclusion which never failed to stir her eloquence was the unquestionable superiority of the Past over the Present; and in this connection she recited two tales without mention of which I feel that the especial atmosphere of Banks cannot be faithfully reproduced. One, indeed, I have told elsewhere; but, with circumspection, it bears retelling.

In the far-distant days, when she and Maria were girls, a lady visiting their parents at Cannon Hall had the misfortune one morn-

ing to find that she was irrevocably locked into an apartment which delicacy forbids me to define. There was nothing for it but to dispatch a groom on horseback to the town of Barnsley, five miles off, to seek out a locksmith who, if he were a godly man, would surely be at church when the messenger arrived, and who would subsequently have to find his way to Cannon Hall probably afoot. So the captive's period of detention was likely to be long; and there was the added grief of missing Divine Service. "But my father," quoth Aunt Frances, without the ghost of a smile, "was a very kind-hearted man. He absented himself from church and read her a sermon through the keyhole." And still I am haunted by the scene which her words conjured up—of a gallant gentleman in his fine Sunday clothes, with lace ruffles and powdered head complete (over which surely a halo must have hovered?), bellowing words of unction through the keyhole to the edified captive beyond. . . .

The other tale was of later date, although it also occurred before my advent in this world. One day Aunt Frances, walking in the garden at Banks, espied her elder brother John, my grandfather, on the wide land below having an unexpected encounter with a predecessor of the dreaded bull. The beast looked unmannerly as it advanced upon him with gleaming eyes and lashing tail, and the space to be traversed ere safety could be reached was wide and steep; moreover, my grandfather was then no longer in his first youth, and flight would have been futile. Aunt Frances could only await the upshot with bated breath. "But John," she said, "had heard of the power of the human eye, so, *faute de mieux*, he determined to put it to the test."

I pictured the scene as she described it. A bent little gentleman, frail but plucky, he faced about boldly and fixed the unpleasant beast with an unflinching stare as he walked cautiously backwards. And for every step which he retreated the bull advanced a step; but the distance between them remained the same. Thus they traversed the wide hill-side, till at length my grandfather reached a stile in the hedge over which he climbed to safety; but ere he walked away, unaware that he was being watched, and with an instinct of politeness towards a defeated foe, he lifted his hat and made a profound bow to the champing beast. "John," concluded Aunt Frances, "could not be otherwise than courteous to the very cattle of the field!"

Truly those were grand old days when a gentleman upheld the traditions of his class in face of the bull which would have tossed him! The tale left me—as it was designed to do—crushed beneath a sense of modern degeneracy.

And yet another fact depressed me. "There is no respect in these days," Aunt Frances used to pronounce in the tone of one who has a definite grievance. "The Young do not respect the

Old, and the Living do not respect the Dead. When I die I shall not be surprised if none of my nephews and nieces put on black for me!" I longed to protest my entire willingness to hang myself in crêpe, yet I felt abashed as though I had been discovered at her funeral clad in scarlet and dancing a reel. . . . Later, I understood her outlook better, for I found and perused a list of the expenses for the interment of her grandmother in 1720. That lady, who died young, was brought for her burial from London to Yorkshire, and I read with awe how there were thirty-six escutcheons on her coffin and clumps of ostrich plumes upon it as well as on the hearse; and at each place where the funeral procession stopped the rooms must have been draped with black cloth, judging by the yards and yards which were purchased; and at the funeral itself 360 pairs of black gloves were given away. And all her near relations, and all her household, followed her on that last gruesome journey from London to Yorkshire in coaches-and-six; still more, they cannot have driven fast, for they took seventeen days to cover the route. Yes, Aunt Frances was right, those were grand old days when the living paid due homage to the dead!

But there was one conclusion which Aunt Frances discussed at meal-times with which, in my rebellious heart, I could never concur. For, by and by, when my mother joined me in Yorkshire, she ventured, in the privacy of her own room, to read aloud to me books of which my aunts did not dream in their philosophy, till one wet day they made the discovery that she was actually reading Shakespeare to me before luncheon. Later I overheard Aunt Frances discussing the incident with Aunt Maria. "Only imagine her stuffing that unfortunate child's head with the inventions of a profane poet at *that* hour!" she lamented, and indirect hints respecting the general depravity of playwriters formed the subject-matter for talk during many subsequent meals. I do not think, however, that Aunt Frances had any rooted objection to the immortal Bard—he might even, in certain aspects, be considered educational; it was reading him before luncheon that constituted an iniquity.

V

After dinner, however, with the day behind them, and its petty discipline relaxed, my aunts would sometimes soften strangely. Seated by the fire with idle hands folded over their pretty muslin flounces, they slipped back unconsciously into a long-dead past. Once more they were fine ladies, moving in the great world, and talking familiarly of names now history, princes and statesmen, noted men and women, who had been their unconsidered friends. . . .

I heard of the revered King George III with his "shrieking laugh" and his ugly little Queen Charlotte surrounded by their magnificent family: "You always knew one of the Royal princes

directly—they were like Saul, a head and shoulders taller than other men, and it was odd to look from them to their prim little mother—just like a white cat, my dear—with *such* a mouth ! " . . . I heard of the Regent, afterwards George IV, when pretty Frances was presented to him, giving her a resounding kiss on her blushing cheek, and then, discovering what a monstrous fine girl she was, repeating the process with increased zest and greater noise. I heard again the tale of how little Philip, their brother (now the awe-inspiring " General," but then an incorrigible pickle although one of the Royal pages), had been asked by the King how he fared at Court. " Tol-lol, pretty bobbish ! " was the lad's nonchalant rejoinder. I heard of the Duke of Wellington, " always neat and dapper like a new pin, with never a hair out of place," dancing the Minuet in white silk stockings at their mother's ball and making dignified jokes to her young daughters ; and I heard how John, my grandfather, had viewed Napoleon at close quarters and decided that the First Consul looked a consummate blackguard. I heard too, of the gay life they had all spent in Paris after the Restoration, when Frances had been known as " La belle Anglaise," and whence they had all returned with their Parisian finery and their Parisian dancing, the envy of their contemporaries. . . .

Like a living, moving panorama that dead world passed in review, in its amazing, its incredible contrast to the life at Banks.

But sometimes Aunt Frances's voice would drop and she spoke in the precise French of her youth, because the subject-matter discussed was not *convenable pour les jeunes creilles*. Then, indeed, I listened assiduously.

" The *on dit*," I heard her say during one of these excursions into the Gaelic tongue, " was that Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, had a daughter, and Lady Betty Foster had a son, and that they exchanged. And after Georgiana's death Lady Betty became nominal stepmother to her own child ! He never could right the wrong, because to do so would have been derogatory to his mother, so though he became Duke, he never would marry, and thus the succession reverted to the rightful heirs. But he was very much in love with——" (here her voice sank to a whisper), " and it was a sad romance, for *she* could not understand his silence, so she married Another."

" *I* remember," corroborated Aunt Maria. " A melancholy man ! One of your favourite dancing beaux, Frances—for a season ! "

* * * * *

So the talk drifted with its broken hearts and forgotten scandals, till at last, even at Banks, the weary day rang to evensong. At nine o'clock tea was brought in—an ample sit-down meal, survival of a date when dinner had been a five-o'clock repast and subsequent sustenance a necessity. Next, as the clock struck ten, prayers

were announced, and after that my Aunts paced upstairs to rest, "a day's march nearer Home."

VI

Such was the daily round, which varied little as the seasons passed. Only in winter did Nature herself effect an innovation when Banks was snowed up, and for days together there came to the house no post, no papers. This threw life sadly out of gear for my Aunts, but the old gardener viewed the event with apathy. "It's natchral in these 'ighlickolities!" [high-localities], he used to say as he dug a little pathway through the snow-drifts in the carriage-drive along which I was sent to take exercise. And as I trotted up and down with frozen feet and a frozen heart, I stared out over the wide pasture-land, so blinding in its monotonous whiteness, or down the interminable avenue—a fairy scene with its glittering archway of frosted boughs and the scarlet holly-berries of the hedges peering through the overlapping snow. . . . But all that beauty only meant that I was shut off more effectually into greater solitude. . . . That carpet of unsullied whiteness covered underlying mud to be so much deeper when the thaw came; and meanwhile the sight of a cart crawling in contrasting blackness up the untrodden roadway seemed an event to watch and long for. . . . There were times when I prayed for the sight of a living thing to form a link with the outer world—the happy world which lay beyond Banks.

And leaning over the green gate, staring down the silent, blanched avenue, again I had recourse to my Muse, and with chilled fingers added yet another poem full of the pessimism of youth in the black-leather copy-book.

HAPPY CHILDHOOD

Oh, Childhood they *say* is all joyous and bright,
The brow is unclouded, the heart is so light,
And gaily we glide down Time's glittering stream,
While Life seems one ravishing, exquisite dream,
The Hours like rivulets fleeting so fast!
All fair is the Future, all golden the Past!

Alas, is *this* childhood—so merry, so wild?
I am not light-hearted, yet I am a child!
A Child!—yet I know not what joyousness means
Save when it may lighten my spirit in dreams;
A Child—yet I gaze on the dark dreary tomb,
With a heart that but sighs to repose in its gloom.
Will the after-life years be less gladsome—oh say
Shall I then be more weary of life than to-day?

Banal and halting were the words, ridiculous the very tragedy which they breathed; yet they were the expression of a sorrow

such as only childhood can know—childhood when the blessed limitation of life's little span is not grasped by us; when that vista of the long, long years seems to reach out before us without realizable termination—lonely and unending as the avenue down which I stood gazing.

Frances & *Maria*

When young.

CHAPTER V

Cranford : The Household

BUT if Banks could be dreary throughout the monotonous winter days and the long winter evenings, it was in summer-time that I endured my most poignant heart-ache. Joying as I did with an almost passionate delight in all the loveliness of earth and sky—the fleecy clouds, the rosy sunsets, the whispering breeze, the wilder moorland wind which came sweeping over the hills to whip brain and limb into an activity and exhilaration otherwise unknown to me, I was a true child of Pan, and the lack of human companionship had no terrors for me when in company with "Nature, the kind old Nurse." But to sit throughout a summer evening with cramped limbs and a chastened spirit, in a room with tightly closed windows, listening to the eternal dogmatizing of my elders—therein for me lay torment ; and this was increased to desperation when on my first advent at Banks I found that the house was closed in summer-time at a fixed hour just as it was in winter. The sun might shine throughout lovely warm evenings, the air might blow enticingly over the wide hills, and the birds might still be singing in the swaying trees ; but when the hour had arrived at which Wright was wont to bolt and bar the front door, custom, stronger than all material barriers, bolted and barred the inmates irrevocably within doors.

For there was one great factor to be reckoned with at Banks, and that was the Household. The Household must never be disarranged.

Unlike the ladies of Cranford, my Aunts, who were rich, kept a large establishment ; and they may aptly be described as servant-ridden. True, their servants adored them, and in that orderly household each did his or her duty with punctilious exactitude. Mrs. Little, whose name belied her figure, with the air of a *grande dame*, cooked dinners which a king might have envied. Wright was a typical butler, pompous, fussy, stout and reliable. The ladies' maid, Channon, past seventy but tall and slender, was the pattern of a bygone maid, with her voluminous skirts just the right degree simpler than those of the Ladies, her neat lawn cuffs and collars, and her crumpled face, like a withered apple. But each was a tyrant in his or her particular department ; and in regard to each my Aunts held an unshakable creed—no servant of theirs could do wrong.

Wright—with a premonition of the Daylight Saving Bill—for his own convenience kept the clocks an hour before the time of day so that he might get his work finished an hour earlier in the evening; but my Aunts obstinately ignored the fact. The outer world was unpunctual, but Wright was always right. No bell was ever rung at Banks—to do so would have been a reflection on the efficiency of the servants. In the evening we sat on in the dusk till the men chose to appear with the lights, and if any bold spirit suggested that they should be summoned, Aunt Maria, with a severity which quelled the speaker, remarked emphatically: "*They'll come!*" If the fire got low and more coals were required, the same answer was returned. There were fixed times for replenishing the hearth, and if the fire was unpunctual in its movements, the feelings of the servants must not be hurt by implication.

Only occasionally did a bolt from the blue ruffle the serenity of that immaculate household. One of the younger servants, bitten by a foolish desire to see something of the Greater World, would give in her notice. This, indeed, happened seldom, for most of the under-servants were recruited locally, and the possibility of change never occurred to them; but when such an event did come to pass, a settled gloom descended upon the entire household. It was as though some disgrace too dreadful to discuss had befallen; my Aunts brooded over the event in silence with dour faces. The life of the culprit during the month which intervened ere she could take her departure must have been singularly unpleasant. Upstairs and down she met with looks askance and the treatment of one who has committed a crime. In truth, her action was a direct reflection felt by all on the perfection of that household of which she had formed part, and each unit severally resented it as a personal affront.

And once—but this was before my advent, and I only heard it spoken of with bated breath as an awe-inspiring legend—a still more dire event had happened. One evening something in the gait of Wright, the butler, had revealed the fact that it was unsteady and unduly hilarious. It was as though Lucifer had fallen from heaven. The fact was so patent that it could not be ignored; so my Aunts took it where they took all their troubles. Just as they had a medicine chest full of simples for all physical ailments, so they had a collection of printed petitions and admonitions applicable to all diseases of the Soul. They forthwith hunted out and inserted in the family prayers a poignant supplication against drunkenness. For three weeks every morning and evening this was read aloud in the presence of the assembled household, and all—more especially one guilty conscience—knew for whom it was intended. It was the most effectual cure for inebriety they could have devised. Never again was Wright known to be wrong.

Yet there was one black sheep belonging to that household

whose blackness constituted a local scandal. The ladies at Cranford had sedan-chairs as a means of locomotion, and in that perhaps they were fortunate. My Aunts, on the contrary, upon fine summer afternoons and Sundays, fared forth in a great yellow coach, or—as they would have described it in their youth—the "Yallar Charyot." It was driven by a man whom we will call Linwood, of smart appearance, but said to be notorious throughout the neighbourhood as a drunkard and a poacher. He starved the horses and sold their corn; he ill-treated them, so that they trembled at his approach; rumour said that he drove them about at night on many an evil errand, and brought them home white with lather in the small hours of the morning; eventually he raced them uphill till he broke their wind. Again and again hints on his conduct were thrown out to my Aunts, but they brushed these aside with freezing dignity. Linwood was their servant. He could do no wrong.

So when he told them that the horses were tired if they went further than two miles to the village and two miles back, they believed him implicitly. And when he told them that the animals were exhausted if they went this distance two days running, they still believed him. And a third, though silent, ruse on his part, was accepted by them with the same implicit faith. For when they took the carriage out on Saturday afternoons, although they always returned home before five o'clock, Linwood could find no other opportunity to clean it save on Sunday morning. Precisely at nine o'clock he knew that my Aunts descended the oak staircase, and so doing must perforce see through the wide window facing them which commanded a view of the courtyard below. And there, precisely at the psychological moment, on three Sundays running, was to be seen Linwood pathetically and laboriously cleaning from the yellow chariot the mud of the previous day. After this, whatever the necessity, my Aunts never took the carriage out on Saturday afternoons.

Oh, those drives in the yellow coach! We went, four of us, in that ponderous vehicle, with both windows up. The horses went very slowly, for Linwood treated them with loving tenderness when the Ladies were there to see; so that even a short drive seemed very long. Once on a very hot day, I remember Aunt Frances opened a little chink of window to let in some air, and Aunt Maria pounced on her with the anxiety of a tiger defending its young. "Don't be imprudent, Fanny!" she cried; and the pane went up, shutting out the sweet summer breeze, while I longed with a desperate longing to smash the glass. Once, my thoughts straying to more remote times, I ventured upon a question: "Aunt Frances, when my great-great-grandmother's funeral travelled for seventeen days from London to Yorkshire, do you think they kept the windows tight-closed all the while?"

And Aunt Frances, apparently addressing Linwood's back, remarked wonderingly: "What is the child thinking about?" And Aunt Maria chimed in firmly: "*Of course* they kept the windows closed, child, if they were prudent. I do not suppose they wanted the expense of *two* funerals!" Well, that was reasonable. The purchase of seven-hundred-and-twenty pairs of black kid gloves was not lightly to be risked; and, after all, why limit the funerals to *two*? I lost myself in a maze of calculations.

Nevertheless, since every rule has its exception, once in the year the lumbering yellow coach travelled further afield. In that part of Yorkshire, at that date, it seemed that everybody who was anybody lived at least nine miles from everybody else. And nine miles over the rough Yorkshire roads, up hill and down dale, with a pair of ancient horses, was an undertaking not to be embarked upon too lightly. Once during the summer months it was considered right that we should pay a visit to Woolley Park, where lived the three Misses Wentworth; but a day was arranged long beforehand, and probably altered many times on account of the weather and the roads. Then at last we drove over to luncheon; we inspected the Woolley hot-houses, we discussed the merits of each flower; we visited the stables and the pigsties; we were even—oh, wild dissipation!—regaled with an early tea; and then, having no doubt bored our kind hostesses to extinction, and being correspondingly bored ourselves, we drove slowly home again. By and by they paid us a return visit, and were treated in similar fashion, and drove away under similar conditions. Then this social intercourse was ended for a year.

Once a week, too, the clergyman called at Banks, ostensibly to look after the spiritual welfare of my Aunts, but literally to regale them with any local news. And once, too, my Aunts sent for him on an especial errand to ask his advice. They had seen a new publication advertised, entitled *Truth*, and they thought it sounded like nice Sunday reading for the servants. With some difficulty he persuaded them that Truth is sometimes stranger—and less improving—than Fiction. Meanwhile, so excited was I at this extra visit, that with a faint stirring of the old Adam I placed a small collection of farthings inside the clerical hat as it lay upon the hall-table waiting for its owner to resume it. But this iniquity once perpetrated, the atmosphere of Banks enfolded me, and I fled cravenly without watching for the merry sequel.

Small wonder that when I first read Cranford the life of that gentle community seemed to me a very vortex of dissipation compared with the life at Banks. Moreover, despite many points of resemblance, there was one virtue rampant at Cranford which found but a mock counterfeit in the existence led by my Aunts.

As hinted, the Banks ladies had incomes which they could never exceed. Their father had owned two estates, their mother

three; each of the family of fifteen children had been lavishly provided for, ere, as their numbers diminished, the fortunes of the deceased went to swell the wealth of the survivors. Thus while at Cranford "genteel parsimony" was a necessity, and, as such, to be politely ignored, at Banks economy was a Christian virtue to be extolled and paraded. Only being very much novices in its practice, my aunts floundered in the attempt, and it burst out in devious forms and strange vagaries scarcely recognizable as that for which it was intended.

Aunt Frances once expounded to me her point of view. "Maria and I unfortunately have money for everything we desire, and there is no merit in giving what one can never miss. So we deny ourselves in certain things, and when we give what is the outcome of self-sacrifice, we trust there is an added blessing with it." The sentiment was fine, but in practice it was less attractive, for one of the forms which it took was that she and Maria allowed themselves but one pocket-handkerchief each per week. Admittedly these were the size of a small table-cloth, but the limitation was to be regretted, nor do I think in this particular instance the poor can have benefited greatly by the proceeds.

Meanwhile Aunt Maria was perhaps the more persistent of the two in eschewing the superfluous and utilizing the discarded. She it was who, when given a gift, restored it hurriedly to the wrapper in which it had been presented, tied it up carefully, and put it away in a drawer whence it never again issued; I fancy she thought she was renouncing luxuries. When the doctor ordered her to smoke Himrod for her asthma, she scrupulously hoarded up all the ends of the cigarettes, and spent hours laboriously piecing these together with stamp-paper in order to use them up. When Wright brought in a pair of candles, she blew one out and let the other burn for a time; then she relit the one previously extinguished and blew out the fellow to it. So, lighting and extinguishing alternately, she diligently continued throughout the evening. "They look so bad if they are not the same length!" she said with simplicity.

After her death a large oak chest upon a landing outside her room, carefully barred and padlocked, baffled all attempts at opening it till, at length, the lock had to be forced. Then within was found—not untold treasures, as many had anticipated—but a collection of all the empty boxes of all the pills she had had throughout her life. Their number was amazing. She had kept these hoping vaguely that some day they might be of use for something, and so prevent such egregious waste!

Yet in contrast to these economies the generosity of my Aunts was unstinted; and just as they were very fine ladies when they chose, so their gifts to all and sundry were on a princely scale. Huge bales of flannel, great rolls of a coarse grey cloth known as Linsey-Wolsey, woollen garments of every description, were hoarded

in chests in the hall ready for all who required them, and no applicant was ever sent empty away.

One day I remember Aunt Maria sallied forth into the garden to do some grafting among her roses. On these expeditions she dressed up to the part—a truly sportsmanlike figure. She donned a hat with bersagliere plumes, which had formerly been her riding hat. She looped up her skirts with elastic; she put on snow-boots; and she huddled one coat over another to prevent soiling the one underneath. Then armed with gardening gloves and a huge basket, she wandered to the rose-garden, where she worked as hard as though paid gardeners were unknown.

That day a tramp strolled furtively into the pleasure-ground, and seeing what he took to be a poor old woman employed for weeding, he accosted her patronizingly.

"Ken ye tell me," he queried, "if them ole ladies 'oo lives here are in?"

"I believe them to be out," responded Aunt Maria truthfully.

"Aay, but they're raight charitubble ladies," continued the tramp loquaciously, with regret at her news. "Queer ole sticks, queer ole sticks, so ah'm told; but raight charitubble. I reckon, Missus," with a friendly wink, "you've not a bad screw here yesself?"

Inside the shapeless jackets and the looped-up skirts Aunt Maria drew herself up to her full height of five feet, and she gazed haughtily out at the man from under her bersagliere hat.

"My good man," she said with dignity, "if you go round to the back door—your proper place—you will find all your wants attended to." And she stalked away, leaving the tramp petrified by the unwelcome realization that, in that little great lady, he had been familiarly addressing one of the "queer ole sticks" with whom he had desired to ingratiate himself.

Every afternoon Wright, followed by a couple of dogs, was sent the round of all the sick in the village, laden with luxuries, food or medicine. The latter was particularly appreciated. Aunt Maria prepared it herself out of her medicine chest, and scrupulously drank up any surplus, no matter for what complaint, in her conviction that good physic should not be wasted. It is a subject of congratulation that she never poisoned herself or anybody else; on the contrary, her pharmacy was so greatly appreciated, that many old folks refused to take anything she had not prepared personally. One old dame, "owd Matty," who did the washing, and always—an effective advertisement—wore a mob cap with elaborately crimped frills, even when seriously ill flatly declined to take anything which the doctor prescribed for her. As a last resource he adopted the humiliating ruse of sending his medicine *viâ* Banks, whereupon she drank it down and derived great benefit. "I knowed it 'ud be summat good if it came frae Banks!" she announced to the clergy-

man triumphantly. " Bout ah couldn't do wi' yon gowk of a doctor's stouff ! "

At intervals in connection with my Aunts' charities a typical dissipation occurred. A haberdasher would arrive from Barnsley in a vehicle like a Black Maria, smothered in boxes. The contents of these were unpacked in the hall, and when the Ladies had received an intimation that all was in readiness, they would pace round the show, and after a faint pretence of selection, would purchase the entire stock. Thus the chests for the poor were refilled ready for an emergency, and when any of the pits stopped work, after a visit to Cannon Hall, where my uncle, Sir Walter Stanhope, fed them, men, women and children flocked to Banks to replenish their wardrobes.

I recall how one day I overheard a typical duologue in the hall between Aunt Maria and one of these applicants.

" What is it you require ? " asked the former, scissors in hand.

" Well," was the rejoinder, " ah could do wi' sum Linsey-Wolsey for t'little 'uns, a nice bit o' flannel for me muther, a seganzy [jersey] for me mann "—and a long list followed, the whole suggested with an air of condescension as of one who is conferring, and not receiving, a favour.

" Aunt Maria," I said, when the beggar was gone, having got all she had mentioned, " that woman seemed to me a bit greedy."

Aunt Maria looked slightly startled.

" And," I said, pursuing my advantage, " she was very cool —she seemed to think she was doing a kindness to you by accepting all those things."

" So she was," said Aunt Maria gently, " for it's more blessed to give than to receive."

But in the arrogance of my youth, even though I loved her, I saw in Aunt Maria only a foolish old woman whom anyone could gull, who was always cross when Aunt Frances was cross, and who was full of silly prejudices of which I in my wisdom saw the absurdity. And so I failed to recognize one of the most beautifully unselfish lives that was ever lived.

Meanwhile as the weeks grew to months, and the months to years, Banks enfolded me more closely. Only at rare intervals did we return to London to live a somewhat lonely existence in the home where all seemed changed since my father's death. As we were only in town for a short period, the house remained in that dreariest of all conditions—partially shut up ; while my mother in her widowhood shunned society more persistently, and I seemed to have lost trace of my former friends.

Released, however, even temporarily, from the thraldom of Banks routine, I used to get up about four in the morning, unsuspected by my elders, and, carrying my shoes, creep downstairs to

one of the empty rooms, where I wrote and studied till breakfast-time. I devoured books then, without fear of discovery; I composed many plays in blank verse which I considered far finer than anything the profane poet Shakespeare had ever written; and just as my sister, when about the same age, had, unknown to me, written a tragedy called *Virginia*, so I for my *magnum opus* chose *Lucretia*, and thereon wrote a gory drama of unmitigated gloom. But those halcyon days always ended too quickly, and the cry of loneliness from Banks urged our speedy return. By and by, as my Aunts waxed more feeble, it became impossible ever to leave them, and on my mother, as the only member of her family with no ties which necessitated her presence at home, devolved the task of looking after them.

Edward Hayes Pickering
Eldest of the eleven children of Edward Rowland Pickering.

CHAPTER VI

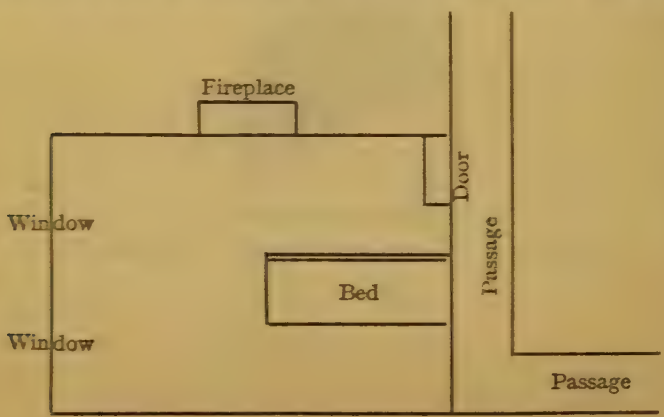
Bygone Yorkshire

I

ONLY to those familiar with the exact details of the life at Banks can an incident which happened during the early part of my sojourn there be appreciated in its full mystery. I relate it simply as it occurred without suggesting any solution—indeed, I have none to offer.

In those days I shared a large room with my nurse, situated at the angle of the passage, near the great oak staircase. On one side were the rooms occupied by my Aunts, on the other more bedrooms reaching away to the far end of the corridor where a door led on to the back stairs and the servants' quarters.

It must further be explained that I slept in a large four-poster with long chintz hangings. This jutted out from the wall, and on a level with its head was the door by which the room was entered, while near its foot, in the wall on the right, was a big fireplace.



Before Jane left me, she invariably tucked the chintz curtains and the sides of the blankets tightly under the mattress to keep out any draught from the door and also to keep from my eyes the ruddy glow of the roaring fire. Being a small and delicate child, unaided I could not have had strength to pull the curtains or the bed-clothes out after she had firmly stuffed them under the mattress; so I was much in the position of a bird in a cage when she went

"PRETTY JANE."

From a drawing by Evelyn De Morgan.

(*See page 20.*)

away to sit in a distant part of the house, and, by and by, to attend family prayers before rejoining me for the night in the big bedroom. It may be added that she usually undressed in the lady's maid's room in order not to disturb me, and came softly upstairs all ready to get into bed. Occasionally, however, my Aunts, on their way to their rooms, would peep in first to see that all was well with the child ; and as they tiptoed out with rustling flounces, they invariably roused me, although I cautiously feigned the set, beatific smile of unconscious innocence.

On this particular night I was ill and feverish with a bad cold, and after being put to bed about eight o'clock I was unable to sleep. I lay wearily tossing from side to side in a vain endeavour to lose consciousness. I watched the fire blazing away through a division in the curtains, and casting flickering shadows upon the ceiling ; I listened to a bitter wind sighing faintly round the house ; yet still, as the hours passed, sleep refused to come to me, and the time seemed interminable. Once Jane came to stoke up the fire, but I " lay low " like B'rer Rabbit, and kept my eyes closed, to avoid being scolded for being awake.

At length, to my joy, ten o'clock struck, and I heard Aunt Frances begin to read prayers in the hall. Almost simultaneously a strange thing happened.

Some days before, my attention had been caught by the sight of Wright, the butler, trotting about the muddy yard and stumping along the stone passages downstairs in a pair of Yorkshire clogs or pattens. These were a sort of metal support which raised him effectually out of the wet, like short stilts, but gave him a ridiculous gait, and made a clattering noise whenever he moved. And now to my amazement I heard the sharp click of pattens coming up the back-stairs, and then treading along the passage towards my room. How it was that these steps were so audible to my ears and did not attract the attention of the worshippers assembled in the hall below I have never been able to explain. That part of the adventure reads as though it were a dream ; but what followed can be explained by no hypothesis of dreaming.

For I sat up in bed, my mind full of one amazed thought : " There is Wright, actually not at prayers, and stumping about the house in his clogs while Aunt Frances is reading ! " Still absorbed in the enormity of this event, I next heard the door of my room pushed open gently, but still I could see nothing on account of the tightly-drawn curtains. Then, the curtains themselves were pulled back and in front of me stood a figure which made such an impression upon me that when I close my eyes I can see it now.

It was a short, broad, figure clad in a plain white nightdress, buttoned up closely round the throat and terminating in a small frill. The hair of the figure was very dark and arranged in long plaits or coils wound closely about its head ; but its back being

towards the fireplace, I could not see what its face was like. The facts which stamped themselves upon my attention were the blackness of the creature's hair, and the breadth of its body—if a denizen from another world, it was not ethereal in form or transparent in substance! Fortunately no sense of fear possessed me. Terrified as I had often been from some wholly ridiculous cause, confronted with the apparently Inexplicable I was only intensely interested and puzzled. Seeing the white, shroud-like garment, I at first jumped to the conclusion that it must be my nurse in her night-dress come to bed. "Are you Jane?" I asked in perplexity; but even so doing, I understood the absurdity of the question, for Jane was fair and slim. . . . The figure made no answer, but, pulling the bed-clothes back, it began to pass its hands over my chest and arms, slightly pinching the flesh.

"What are you doing?" I demanded, under a vague impression that this curious behaviour represented some sort of treatment for my cold and was possibly a preliminary to the application of a mustard plaster; but as the pinching waxed more severe, I remonstrated, and at length began to cry.

Then at last my strange visitor spoke. "*Does it hurt?*" it asked in a deep, muffled voice.

"I should think it did!" I responded indignantly; and between bewilderment and pain I cried more loudly. Then, without another word, my mysterious visitant turned, and marched out of the room, leaving the door wide open. Stifling my sobs, I snuggled once more under the blankets as I listened to its departing footsteps; and at that moment I heard Aunt Frances reading the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in the hall below, followed by the blessing. The whole episode must have lasted about a quarter of an hour. A few minutes later Jane came up to bed.

Great was her astonishment on finding the door wide open, the curtains drawn back, and the bed-clothes pulled from under the mattress. She naturally jumped to the conclusion that my Aunts had visited me, and her annoyance at their careless behaviour found expression in muttered exclamations of which I did not catch the import. Foolishly I did not at once tell her about my curious visitor. I was in the habit of keeping my thoughts and experiences to myself; and, seeing she was cross, again, like B'rer Rabbit, I lay low.

But the next day I heard an angry altercation between her and my Aunts' maid, Jane asserting that my Aunts had been guilty of a great lack of consideration when they had been in to see me the night before, and on Channon maintaining that she knew the Ladies had gone straight to their own rooms on coming up from prayers, Jane dwelt on the state in which she had found me "with that bad cold, in a draught enough to kill her!" and expatiated upon the obvious reasons why I could not personally have created

the dangerous conditions aforesaid. "You can have me up for *liable*, else!" she protested indignantly. Inquiry, however, subsequently substantiated the truth of Channon's statement; and, no longer able to keep silence, I told Jane of my strange adventure.

To my amazement and indignation my story was at once pooh-poohed. "You dreamt the whole thing," she asserted, "or you're just inventing!"

"But what about the curtains and the door?" I argued indignantly. "You yourself said that I could never have pulled the curtains back and the bed-clothes from under that heavy mattress?"

But alas for my faith in the consistency of human nature, she at once revoked everything she had previously said on this subject, and I was silenced, but the more upset. I was too young to understand her anxiety that I should not be frightened, and, above all, that I should not brood on the incident; thus she adopted the one course which stamped it indelibly upon my imagination. For I was bitterly hurt at the incredulity with which my truthful account was received. That it should be dismissed as a silly invention or a deliberate lie rankled horribly. It forthwith occupied all my thoughts, and, since no element of fear or suspicion of anything supernatural being connected with it crossed my mind, I promptly added a petition to my daily prayers that my mysterious visitor might be allowed to come again, and thus enable me to clear myself of the accusation of untruthfulness, on which I dwelt morbidly. The sequel, however, was curious.

A few days later, Jane, helping me to change my dress, suddenly gave an exclamation of dismay. "Why," she cried, "whatever have you been doing to yourself? Your arms are one mass of black bruises!"

"Yes," I replied, "that's where that figure I told you about pinched me; but you wouldn't believe me."

"Nonsense!" she said, vehemently; but I felt triumphant, for I knew by her manner that she was entirely convinced.

It was, however, not till many years afterwards that I learnt that every inquiry had been made at the time of the occurrence, and no explanation of it was ever arrived at. It was ascertained that on that particular evening the house, according to invariable custom, had been shut and barred, back and front, from six o'clock onwards. Likewise, according to precedent, no visitors had been admitted for the servants—indeed the isolation of Banks made it unlikely that anyone would call there late in the winter on a dark night. Finally, not one member of the household had been absent from prayers. It only remains to add that the house had no reputation of being haunted and no uncanny visitors had been seen there before, or have been seen there since.

II

But while no more nocturnal pinchers came to relieve the monotony of my life, as a stream which is too tightly compressed within narrow limits will overflow more widely than one which is not restricted, so my cramped little soul found various channels to happiness which under other conditions might have remained closed to it.

At that date my cousins were seldom at Cannon Hall. They went from Yorkshire to London, to Scotland, to Italy; and at all times they were a merry party whose cheery lives made my own seem more drab by contrast. When I drove home in the yellow coach after visiting them, the shadow of the avenue seemed darker and the languid splosh of the horses' hoofs upon the muddy roadway seemed more depressing. Yet I remember one episode which left me with a lingering ripple of amusement for days.

There had been a big house-party at Cannon Hall. Lord Wolseley was there and many whose names I have forgotten, also a corresponding number of ladies who on that afternoon were parading about on the lawn in lovely, delicate summer dresses, so that we children were packed off elsewhere to play. But the spirit of mischief entered into one small cousin, Walter; and from whence I know not, he secured a large basket of soot. Therewith he climbed up on to the roof, and the summer breeze did the rest. Soon consternation reigned, as on to the lawn below there drifted a shower of black flakes, soiling the pretty dresses, scattering their horrified wearers, and rousing puzzled inquiries as to which chimney could possibly be on fire. And meanwhile, unseen, up aloft sat a small black imp rejoicing in the commotion and grinning happily from ear to ear!

My cousins, however, had one mine of happiness in which I revelled—a large library of children's books, of which fairy-tales formed the greater number. There were many written by a man known to me as "Mr. Catch-a-bull Huggingson," who, so I was told, could see fairies even in the House of Commons; and his knowledge of witches, of ogres, of fays and goblins filled me with admiration for him and a profound sense of imperishable gratitude.

To-day, from time to time, there arises in the papers a discussion respecting the advisability of allowing the young to have their sense of truth distorted and their minds confused by such pernicious fiction—so totally unlike real life. But the people who argue thus have never lived at Banks. I can only utter my feeble protest against robbing the little minds of the future of that which is their birthright—the Fairyland of Childhood—that elusive world of graceful fancies and radiant visions, an afterglow from which may gild with poetry life's later prose. The terrors of Darkness will always dog the steps of Childhood, and if the fairer aspect of the

world of imagination is to be closed to them—if the children of to-morrow are to be steeped in Realism—Heaven help an earth from which the last sweet breath of romance will have fled!

Other writers there are who assert that the fairies hav materialized; they have submitted to be photographed; they wear bobbed hair and dress like chorus girls, also they have dull hard eyes with no soul looking through. But my fairies were far otherwise. They were the essence of all things beautiful which I loved—of the glittering dew upon the grass, of the clouds at sunset, of rainbow tints and the bloom upon a peach, of the music of the birds and the scent of the flowers; they were crystallized poetry, and although they have long since vanished, the glamour of their presence has lingered, and will be with me to the end.

Thus they touched my grey little world with magic, transforming it to a land of delight. When I walked through the garden at Banks with its dark overgrown laurels, I discovered that the roses bowed their heads to me as I passed, that the trees swayed in tender homage, and that the birds sang for me their sweetest songs. I knew that I was in truth the Queen of the Fairies, Ruler of a kingdom to which my elders had no access, and of the existence of which they little recked. The black-and-tan terrier Mighty, my sole playmate, became a bewitched Prince who would one day regain his real form to carry me away to the Land of Dreams-come-true, indeed many incantations did he undergo in a vain attempt to hasten this event. When the bull was absent and I dared venture to the stream at the bottom of the hill, it became for me a flashing, mysterious trail of silver, with pebbles which were jewels that the Prince had dropped, and pixie-haunted caverns beyond which lay a wonderful castle that I should surely find. Even Aunt Frances and Aunt Maria, when cross, were condoned by me as having an affinity to witches and ogres of a type inevitably chastening to the young; and in like manner I discovered an unfailing antidote to a surfeit of sermons.

For on Sunday, when it was considered too wet for Linwood to drive to Church, my Aunts read a long service at home, followed by a longer homily, the work of some dead divine whose most praiseworthy action, so it seemed to me, must have been when he quitted a world infinitely bored by his presence. And while Aunt Maria, with her usual dramatic emphasis, declaimed his sentiments, I cautiously drew before me a screen which had a hanging silk flounce to correspond with the green flounces that protected the "best" pictures. I had secreted a collection of shot, big bullets and little bullets, with marks to identify them so that I knew each apart, and I had two tiny dolls named Jocular and Jovialar. These, as *dramatis personæ*, assisted by the folds of my dress, my prayer-book, and a bit of newspaper for the *mise en scène* enabled me to enact many a thrilling drama in my lap—miniature

battles, wonderful adventures, hairbreadth escapes; *and I heard not one word of the sermon.* Nor did the habit thus acquired desert me in later life, for, bit by bit, I wrote a novel while my mother similarly read prayers aloud to me on wet Sundays.

In other respects the Old Adam was not wholly extinguished in me.

One day at the children's service, I remember, the clergyman took as the basis of his discourse an old proverb which relates "The Devil is always in the Church porch." He utilized this figuratively to impress upon us the facility with which evil impulses succeed good resolutions, but he wound up his peroration by the cryptic utterance: "Now, dear children, I want you to carry this idea away in your hearts—wherever there's a porch the Devil is always in it!" Two things in connection with this announcement struck me. Although there was no porch to the vestry door, yet both the doors by which the congregation were forced to leave the Church had this dangerous appendage. Moreover, only recently at the Vicarage itself a second porch had been added! So I thought of a better version of the same proverb, and wrote—

"'The Devil is always in the Church-porch,'
Oh, that is a saying most rare!
Dear Children, remember, where'er there's a porch
The Devil most surely is there!"

If this is the case, then, I quite understand
Why *you* use that small vestry door;
'Tis for reasons which—truly sublime and profound—
Never entered my noddle before!

Of these nice little rooms for His Highness to sit
We had surely much better beware;
And whatever *you* feel, *we* could really dispense
With his tender proximity there!

But—strangest of all—at the Vicarage doors
(Lo! this must with meaning be fraught!)
Not content with the evil of having got one
A ponderous second was brought!!

Oh P——tt, I can tell you a proverb more true
Than any you uttered to-day—
Whenever a clerical coat-tail's in view
The Devil is not far away!

III

As I grew older I made yet another discovery at Banks. All books in the house which bore the name of Marianne Hudson[1] on the title-page were of a different stamp to those usually approved

[1] Marianne, second child of Walter Spencer Stanhope, Esq., M.P., and his wife *née* Winifred Pulleine. She was the author of *Almacks*, and married Robert Hudson, Esq., of Tadworth Court. Born 1786; ob. 1862.

Mrs. Hudson, of Tadworth Court, Epsom
(*née* Marianne Spencer-Stanhope).
Author of "Almacks."

by my Aunts. She had been a clever woman, this unknown sister of theirs, who had married and died before my birth ; and stray volumes from her library, which had been preserved out of respect to the one-time owner without regard to the contents, covered a wide range of thought and were fodder for my hungry mind. Forthwith, whenever I saw a book bearing the bookplate of Marianne, I stole it, and secreted it in the bedroom which by this date I had to myself. At night, with every chink of light carefully excluded from the passage beyond and the possibly observant eye of Aunt Maria, I browsed on this private treasure to my heart's content. In the drawing-room I still read *How Susan lost her First Place* and similar improving fiction, but at night I entered upon another world more wonderful even than my Fairy Kingdom. I devoured Brewster's *Plurality of Worlds*, Tucker's *Light of Nature*, Louis Figuier's *Day after Death*, even Locke *On the Human Understanding*, besides many queer old books, long out of print,—a promiscuous medley of scientific, metaphysical, historical and heterodox Works, thereby enlarging my mental, and curtailing my physical, vision, since I presume that my extreme short sight was produced through so much reading at night by the light of a solitary hand-candle.

And so gradually my outlook expanded ; while I continued to appreciate the orthodox works with which my Aunts provided me from a standpoint little suspected by them. The *Fairchild Family* remained a joy to me solely on account of its amazing trio of little prigs and the delightful ingenuity with which each chapter led up to the moral lesson and hymn at its conclusion. Ellen, too, in *The Wide, Wide World*, a veritable human water-spout, was a source of glee to me with her impressive aptitude for bursting into tears on the smallest provocation, an accomplishment which I found that, try as I would, I could not emulate. Gradually, too, I understood that the generation to which my Aunts belonged had a surprising proclivity for inventing sins for the young, for magnifying the innocent peccadilloes of youth into grave crimes, for extolling morbid self-introspection. Religion to them was a species of Fire-Insurance ; happiness to them was a wile of the Devil to distract the dwellers in Time from the mirage of Eternity ; and the Other-Worldliness which they inculcated was alas ! a nebulous affair based primarily on the old, old faith of the dissatisfied in the certainty of " Jam to-morrow." . . . So, as in my childish night-mare, and as so often in after-life, I made friends with the Bogie I had feared, I played with it and found that it was, after all, the unsubstantial creation of a dream.

For the rest, my recognized education proceeded in desultory fashion. Music and German lessons were available locally, and my mother in the privacy of her room continued to read to me books which she surreptitiously secured from London. Also my eldest brother offered to teach me Mathematics by post. My heart

sank when I realized that his frightening presence could reach me even in the far-away North, and forthwith papers used to arrive weekly from Balliol, over the contents of which I worried so greatly that more than once I had the curious experience of continuing in my sleep to work at problems which had baffled me by day, and of reaching a solution in my dreams which, on waking, I thankfully proved to be correct. Unaided by any explanation, I had to cope with the mysteries of vulgar and decimal fractions, and even the rudiments of Algebra ; nor was this the worst, for inserted here and there among the orthodox sums, were questions designed to *make me think.* One of these (which may have been a riddle, but, if so, was unknown to me) I remember was the query—" Which is the right side of a plum-pudding ? " This I unravelled successfully, " The side which is eaten, *because it isn't left !* "

Only one branch of knowledge was withheld from me. As my sister had devoted herself to Art professionally, I was never allowed to learn to draw until it was thoroughly ascertained that I could never do so, whereupon I was urged to have drawing lessons. " I have one artist," my mother used to say anxiously, " I do want one daughter."

Nevertheless an unlooked for event occurred in my life. I had written a long Fairy-story, *The Adventures of Prince Almero ; a tale of the Wind-Spirit,* and a publisher saw it, with the result that it blossomed out into a fully-fledged book with many of my fancies materialized into pictures, and a beautiful sea-blue cover on which was depicted the Wind-Spirit in gold, drifting over golden waves. For long afterwards I always slept with that book on a chair beside me. It was the last thing I read at night and the first thing my happy eyes fell on in the morning. Then a friend wrote to me crudely—" What a joke you are—I opened your book and the first thing I saw was ' *the sun had sank.*' " Next, my uncle, Mr. Roddam Stanhope, from Italy, inquired, " Did you derive your inspiration from the murmuring Zephyrs in Bryanston Square ? " After that the sea-blue book became to me as other books. Its glamour had vanished.

IV

Briefly I must refer to the atmosphere external to Banks, to the Yorkshire of that bygone date.

I have hitherto spoken little of my uncles, Mr., afterwards Sir Walter, Stanhope and his brother Roddam, because at the date when I lived in Yorkshire they were but seldom there. The former, who was now owner of my grandfather's estates, after the death of his wife usually wintered abroad with his brother at the beautiful old Villa purchased by the latter on the hill of Bellosguardo, Florence, which I shall have occasion to mention later. But the thoughts and affections of both continued to centre round the home

of their boyhood and the then pretty, sleepy little village of Cawthorne which extended in straggling hamlets without the park wall of their old home.

Both my uncles were tall men, of commanding appearance; and in London I had seen people turn to look after the striking trio when, in company with my great-uncle, Lord Leicester, who was their contemporary in age, they marched away from our house, all wearing the grey top-hats and immaculate clothes then *de rigueur*, and all three of the same build and height. But while Roddam, to the amazement of his family, had launched into a totally unexpected career and become a pre-Raphaelite painter, his elder brother had stepped into the rôle which his seniority assigned to him, and had become the representative country squire of a fine old type now rapidly disappearing.

The intense affection which, throughout life, existed between the two brothers, was perhaps remarkable in view of their really opposite dispositions. Roddam, an apostate from the traditions of his class, with the elasticity of an adaptable temperament, was equally at home in Bohemia or in fashionable society. He was full of originality, of humour; and his merry philosophy of life, his extreme warm-heartedness and his generosity, endeared him to all. Walter regarded existence from a different and more conventional standpoint. With a fine intellect, he subordinated every consideration to that of fulfilling conscientiously the duties which Fate had allotted to him as the owner of a large estate, the father of a large family. In religion he was strictly orthodox, in politics he was rigidly Tory—in this capacity he represented the West Riding for many years; in his dealings he was rigidly just. He knew no compromise between right and wrong, no half-way house between good and evil; and he had a summary way of dealing with all offenders.

I have heard that when he was a young man my grandmother used tactfully to invite to the house girls whom she termed "wiveables." But my uncle had a horror of tight-lacing, and the first thing he used to do with any prospective bride was to take her out for a walk and march her pitilessly at a good round pace up to the top of Hoy Hoyland, the highest hill in the neighbourhood. If the victim paused *en route* to admire the view, he concluded she was "winded," and thereupon, considering her no longer eligible, he took no further interest in her.

I have heard another tale—although this is anticipating events—that after the death of my great-aunts the ubiquitous Linwood, to whom they had left a handsome legacy, applied to my uncle for some post which was vacant. The man, whatever his secret character, was ultra-plausible in speech and ultra-respectable in appearance, so that many believed in him. My uncle patiently heard him enumerate all his supposed qualifications, and then

pointed to the door: "I have nothing to do with *rogues*!" was his sole rejoinder; and Linwood, all his self-assurance evaporated, slunk silently away.

With his tenants my uncle kept up the traditions of his family. My grandfather, for instance, forced to claim some tender of rent for his cottages, used to collect one shilling per annum from the old people, then give them a lavish public banquet, and return to each man the shilling he had paid. Many were the equally characteristic yarns connected with my uncle.

Once after an electioneering campaign, he hurried back to Cawthorne to interview his agent. "Any news, Wemyss?" he asked.

"Bad news, sir, bad news!" responded Wemyss with a twinkle in his eye. "Old Johnny B. has sent in an ultimatum; he wants a new fireplace put in his cottage at once or he threatens to leave."

"Oh—ah," said my uncle. "By the way, what rent does old John pay?"

"*Rent?*" repeated the agent, "he hasn't paid a penny of rent for seven years."

"Oh-ah," said my uncle with a smile. Then, as he left the room: "See that the masons are sent to old John's cottage first thing to-morrow morning."

In those days in Yorkshire class antagonism was unknown. The Squire was still regarded with all the glamour of an affectionate feudalism. To him still clung something of the right divine of Kings—he could do no wrong. The parson might err; he, poor fellow, was, after all, but an importation and of his very calling was forced to exercise a tiresome habit of picking holes in others; but the Squire remained a Being apart, and all related to him shared a reflected glory.

Yet while the old Yorkshire folk rendered unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, they eschewed all senseless palaver. Respect was in the heart—it was not on the lips—to a stranger it might have seemed conspicuous only by its absence. The old villagers often talked to me of "Walter" and "Monty" when referring to my uncle or his eldest son; but no familiarity was intended. It was the pride of personal possession; the Squire and his children belonged to them; the stiff "Sir" or "Mr." would have conveyed a different atmosphere. So, too, when I went into the cottages there was no veneer of assumed civility in my welcome. "Cum in, luve—cum roight in!" was the hearty greeting, followed in the days of my youth by a stifling "houg." The word "Miss" figured little in their vocabulary, save as being applicable to "furriners." In my case, if they had substituted it for the familiar "luve," I should almost have resented it as an impertinence.

One day my uncle had walked up to the beautiful old church

at Cawthorne to show it to a party of guests ; and coming through the churchyard later I overheard the following conversation between two men who were working there.

" I see Mr. Stainhope and a gran' cumpany go oup t' t'Church an hour a-gone," observed one admiringly.

The other glanced at his comrade with a wink—he was evidently slowly evolving a joke. " Happen—" he said at last, tentatively, " you'd see t'Prince o' Wailes along o' Mr. Stainhope ? "

There was a pause of uncertainty on the part of the first speaker, who could not quite gauge the nature of the remark—whether it was serious or facetious. " Happen ah did—happen ah didn't ! " he responded at last diplomatically. " Bout—" firmly—" it's the Prince 'ud be the proud mann to be along o' Mr. Stainhope ! "

And years after, when the Duke of Clarence went to Cannon Hall, I asked a Cawthorne man if he had seen the Royal visitor. " We made no fous," he responded stolidly ; " It didn't seem raight by Mr. Stainhope." And I understood. The Duke of Clarence might become King of England, but he could never be Squire of Cawthorne.

Once a man who had received many benefits from the Hall " took against " my uncle during election time and canvassed for the Liberals. One morning he was passing the time o' day with Joe Sykes, who worked a little pit near the village, and being of a sanctimonious nature, he observed unctuously : " Well, Joe, lad, thou and I's a deal to thank the Lord for ! " " Aye, lad," responded Joe dryly, " but thou's a deal more practical stouff to thank Mr. Stainhope for, and thou's barn to vote for him." So the apostate compromised with conscience ; he continued to canvass for the Liberals but personally he voted for Mr. Stanhope.

Quick of wit, curt of phrase, stolid in manner, the Yorkshireman of that day was a ready reader of his fellow men, and gave expression to his opinions without reticence. But there was always this anomaly to be faced—you might be worshipped in your own village and pelted in the next. For he was keenly suspicious of all " furriners," by which he understood all those who were not native to the same parish as himself. A " furriner," if he was not actively anathema, was at best but a poor thing, to be tolerated, not encouraged, and from whom any hint of patronage was quickly resented—for none was quicker than a man Yorkshire-born to detect and demolish the faintest indication of snobbishness in one who was not indigenous to the soil.

A curate's wife from the South, who annoyed the villagers in a remote parish by her assumption of a gentility to which they did not consider her entitled, one day entered a cottage where she found the very usual sight of a collier, not too fully clad, busily engaged in ironing his shirt for Sunday. He acknowledged her arrival characteristically with a short nod, and continued his work

without taking further notice of her presence. She therefore seated herself uninvited, and tried to promote conversation by announcing the interesting news that her husband had been offered a living, and that he and she were about to move to another sphere of usefulness. She awaited some expression of regret.

"Be ye?" observed her host, in answer to her news, as he ironed steadily.

"We are sorry, of course, to leave you," she added tentatively.

"Be ye?" again rejoined her host laconically.

"But you see," she suggested, slightly nettled, "it will be in some things an agreeable change for us. For in *that* parish there are nothing but ladies and gentlemen."

Her host looked up, fixing her momentarily with his steely glance. "I reckon ye'll make a bit of an alteration in that!" he observed thoughtfully as he resumed his ironing.

Mr. Pratt, who was Vicar of Cawthorne for over forty years, was previously curate at Hoylandswaine. When he was leaving there, one old woman to whom he went to say farewell refused for long to shake hands with him because he was going away, but in the end she relented, thus qualifying her regrets: "Bout the furst time ye cum, ye sat sae quiet, and ye looked sae simple, I niver thowt ye'd do fur t'plaice."

Subsequently Mr. Pratt was often called in to decide knotty points which would have baffled the wisdom of Solomon. Quarrels were submitted for his arbitration, usually respecting the distribution of property after death. One of these cases was a difference of opinion as to whom had descended the right to have the milk which had been sent as a charity from the Hall for many months for the deceased invalid. It was apparently considered a matter of inheritance as to whom this should be continued; and each of two robust claimants contended wrathfully that it had been "left" to her.

Moreover, no Yorkshireman was ever without a baffling retort when confronted with any aspersion upon his character. One day Mr. Pratt waylaid a notorious drunkard in the street with the reproof: "Now, George, I am sadly afraid you were the worse for drink again on Saturday."

"Weel, Mr. Pratt," was the affable rejoinder, "I'll not deny ye. But Scripture says it's not what goes *into* a man which defiles him; and ye've niver heard a bit o' bad languidge cum *owt* at me mouth!"

Again there was a tenants' dinner at which all the men were lavishly regaled with salmon, and from which, after much admonition, they all returned sober; but a few days later Mr. Pratt encountered one of the guests who had been lauded for abstemiousness reeling in a grievously hilarious condition through the village.

"Oh, Tom, Tom," he remonstrated sadly, "you take my

advice—just go home, and have a cup of tea, and don't come out again ! "

" Well, Mr. Pratt," said the culprit, much injured ; " I'm not for saying ah've not had a soop too mouch to-day ; but "—proudly —" didn't ah git home right grandly after yon salmon job ? "

My individual experience of the Yorkshire folk never varied. Within the neat cottages I was pressed to eat oatcake which had hung from the rafters over the kitchen fire till it had acquired a fine flavour of ancient smoke ; among the more well-to-do, wine was substituted. There was one old dame who if ever she spied me passing, at no matter what hour in the morning, insisted on my entry to drink a glass of home-made sherry or a terrible brew from rhubarb and vinegar. Either of these beverages, taken at an early hour, produced an effect on which memory does not love to linger. But more fearful than these enforced repasts were the occasions when my sympathy was claimed by the proud owner of a sore leg—or any sore which was on a part of the body that could be exhibited. If it was a running sore, so much the prouder was its possessor ; and many a time have I assumed an attitude of sympathetic admiration while bandages were removed, and the treasured ailment was displayed to a gaze which mercifully as I grew older became too short-sighted to see anything at all. But even the conceited owner of a running sore shrank into insignificance before the proud relative of an unburied corpse. That was a glory which, although of its very nature regrettably transient, was very great. " Sho' mak's a gran' boddy—cum in luve ! " was an eager invitation with which it was difficult to avoid compliance.—" I daren't go near the village to-day," my mother used to say. " So-and-so is not buried yet ! "

But a tale of old Anthony, my uncle's gamekeeper, became a classic. For Anthony lived upon the moors, and when his wife died in that remote spot her relations determined that she should be buried in more civilized regions and arranged that the funeral should take place some miles away rather than in a more handy cemetery. " I tould them," complained Anthony, grievously indignant, " that it was joust making a toil of a pleasure ! "

A curious epitome of the native characteristics was to be found in the strange nondescript then familiar to dwellers in the North as a " Yorkshire Natural." Acknowledged to be half-witted, and with a cast of countenance which confirmed this appellation, the Natural was in many respects more shrewd even than his sagacious neighbours, save that, owing to some peculiar kink of brain, he was destitute of the sense of fitness. For him neither Class nor Occasion had existence. To his opinions he gave expression at all times and to all persons with a naïveté which outdistanced even the bluntness of his fellows. Moreover, his strange flashes of wit and insight took one unawares. His intelligence was like the hearing

of a deaf person, which a shout may fail to penetrate but a whisper may reach—particularly if it is a whisper not intended to do so. I have sometimes wondered if the Natural was a modern development of the old-time jester—a bit of a cynic, a bit of a wag, who traded on his privilege of being rude with impunity. For the essential of this type was an entire frankness. The Natural was not a fool, he was merely—*natural.*

A woman who came under this category was employed to clean out the Church. She was not of the brilliant order of Natural, but it interested me to watch her eyes. They were dull as though a veil were drawn over them blotting out all intelligence, then, suddenly, the veil would be lifted and they would flash into life and fun, while for the moment she looked at one with a penetration which was disconcerting.

Later I learnt to play the organ ; and when I arrived to practise as she worked, she took me to her heart at once. " Yor a bit o' cumpney ! " she said with satisfaction. Then she glanced round fearfully at the dark precincts of the Church where the woodwork of the pews occasionally emitted sounds like a miniature pistol-shot, and up at the organ whence the wind was evaporating with a ghostly sigh, and she gave me her confidence. " When ah'm alone i' t'church, them seats go crack ! crack ! crack ! and that there organ goes pouff ! pouff ! pouff ! till it's enough to skeer a boddy ! But "—with immense relief—" yor a bit o' cumpney ! "

Forthwith we were friends ; moreover, since she talked delightfully broad Yorkshire, and I flattered myself that I was an adept at the lingo, I used to practise my accomplishment under the happy conviction that she was incapable of detecting the fact. I fancy our conversations must have been worth listening to. But one day my friend put her arms a-kimbo and eyed me with a faintly quizzical glance. " You," she observed with a fine sarcasm, " tork better nor ah can messen ! "

Often I failed to discover whether she was intentionally or unconsciously cynical. Proud of my limited organ playing, I begged to be allowed to perform at the service one Sunday during the offertory sentences. For a week beforehand I practised painstakingly with the clergyman's daughters. They strode unwearyingly from the pulpit to the chancel at the pace their father usually walked; they read out the sentences at the speed at which he read them, and meanwhile I planned my efforts most carefully to play softly while the texts were read and loudly during the intervals. All seemed to fit in to perfection at our last rehearsal ; but, alas, when the momentous day and hour arrived, everything went wrong. Either the clergyman walked more quickly than his daughters had done or he read faster, but being unable to gauge his progress from where I sat, I so timed my playing that, at each silence, the organ sank to an inaudible whisper, while no sooner did the unfortunate

man attempt to speak than a deafening and joyous roar from the instrument drowned his utmost efforts to make himself heard. The next time I went to practise, my friend, who was scrubbing the church, looked at me thoughtfully. "You did play foine o' Sunday," she said, without the suspicion of a smile; "*t' passon he niver got a say in!*"

My Aunts considered that I ought to teach in the Sunday School; so, to please them, I went; but I cannot boast that my tuition was an unqualified success. My class seemed gratuitously to evolve ideas which no power of mine could eradicate. For one, the collect they always termed the colic, and seemed to consider both an equal matter of pain. They assured me that the epistles were the wives of the apostles; and when a clergyman once asked what was the meaning of the word Amen, a small boy interpreted it joyously as signifying—"*That's done!*" Once a month the entire school was catechized in church, and I sat in nerve-racking anxiety lest the question might arise which I had often propounded to my class and which unvaryingly met with the same response:

Q. "And what did Joseph's brethren do to Joseph?"

A. "Ate 'im oup!"

Another trait I also found chastening. The children had an objectionable habit of gathering huge bunches of wild-flowers on their way to school and presenting me with these as a token of undying affection. The bouquets, which had been already clasped far too long and far too tightly in hot, chubby hands, were likewise all untied; and I had subsequently to walk to church like a sorry impersonation of Flora, shedding dying blossoms as I passed. But even worse were the delicacies which were generously presented to me—not always without a suspicion of having been previously sucked.

One day in the middle of the sermon I observed a small and grimy girl seated next to me fumbling with her underskirt till she produced thence a still more grimy handkerchief. Untying a knot in the corner of this she took from it a large peppermint sweet of the type known as "Mottoes," and as she handed this to me, I saw that on it was stamped the encouraging legend "Faint Heart never won Fair Lady." I felt that the situation required tact. "Thank you very much," I whispered politely as I transferred the black object gingerly to my purse; but the fact that I did not at once proceed to suck it was evidently felt to be a slight. The donor with a sigh gave vent to an assertion which, in view of the colour of the offering, I could not doubt: "Oh," she remarked with a world of reproach in her voice, "an' I kep' it for you such a long time!"

At Christmas, bands from all the villages round used to invade the big houses, and Banks became a perfect pandemonium. Players on wind-instruments or carol singers used to perform most of the

day and part of the night; two sets sometimes arrived at once and glared at each other in unfriendly fashion; while on Christmas Eve, during dinner, the handbell ringers were admitted into the oak hall and rang tunes with merry dexterity till the old house took on an air of unwonted festivity. Little children, too, arrived carrying dressed-up dolls in wooden boxes, an unrecognized survival of the days when Our Lady was hawked round in similar fashion. And they piped to my Aunts in a sweet, clear treble, with no sense of its lack of fitness:

> God bless the Master of this house,
> God bless the Mistress too,
> And all the little children
> That round the table grew.

I heard that when my uncle, Roddam Stanhope, still lived in Yorkshire, the Waits, according to their tactless habit, once arrived before his house in the dead of a cold night and sang excruciatingly under his window the hymn which was a special favourite locally:

> Chrees-chuns ar-wake! Sar-lute the ar-py Morn—

Whereupon he heard an old maid who was in his service splash a douche of cold water into the precincts below with the practical comment: "The Christians in *this* house want to go to sleep—be off with yer!"

Both at Cannon Hall and Banks on Christmas Eve the dole was distributed to the poor, and at the latter place the butcher himself had to be in attendance to see that each joint of meat was of satisfactory weight and quality ere it was presented with kindly greeting by the Ladies themselves to each deserving recipient. During hard times the quantity was doubled or trebled. When the pits stopped work great distress prevailed in the surrounding districts, for the miner in prosperity was an improvident being, and made no provision for a rainy day. Yet he faced disaster with a stubborn courage and simple heroism which compelled admiration. One woman told me that her husband used, day after day, to go out early and walk round the country seeking work, and his breakfast of bread-and-butter was put on the table for him over-night. But it was never touched; and when his children awoke they invariably found it divided in pieces and placed upon their pillows; their father had tramped off starving that his children might have more.

In the neighbouring village of Silkstone is a relic of the times when young children themselves used to work in the pits. A monument there erected in the churchyard to the memory of miners who lost their lives through the flooding of a mine records the name of children of eight and ten years of age. One man is still living at Cawthorne who never saw daylight in the winter when he was a boy, as he was taken on his father's back to the pit before it was

light, and it was dark again before they came back. Yet the father was a clever, ingenious man who built an organ for himself, while the son was a student of Nature in all its forms, and made a wonderful collection of moths and butterflies.

V

The mention of Silkstone brings before me the remembrance of a being who, perhaps more than all others, represented the spirit of bygone Yorkshire.

Beyond the village there lived the widow of the former squire, Mrs. Clarke of Noblethorpe, a noted follower of hounds. Ere her marriage she had appropriately borne the name of Miss Reynard; and a splendid rider, fearless and tireless, she pursued the fox from her early youth till within four years of her death recently at a ripe old age. A singularly handsome woman, an excellent raconteuse, and for those days unconventional as she was fascinating, even while she defied the petty prejudices of the county, she took all hearts by storm. For the secret of her success was her own warmth of heart and her profound sincerity; while a great tenderness, which belied what was then considered her masculine proclivities, was extended even to the luckless fox.

"Although I live for hunting," she confessed once before a group of enthusiastic sportsmen, "I hate being in at the death."

"Oh, do you, mother?" piped her small daughter Mab in contradistinction; "*I* love the stink!"

Much in the fashion in which she pitied the fox, she extended her compassion to the "por old Miss Stainhopes," as she dubbed them in Yorkshire parlance. "They lead such dull lives, and they're full of such nonsensical ideas, por old things!" she said to me frankly one day; and with a troop of week-enders and dogs she would tramp over the hills on Sunday evenings, and, leaving her noisy following in the fields below, she would come in for an hour's penance to amuse the dull old ladies. No matter if Wright had bolted and barred the door, she would thunder at it till it was opened, and then burst in like a breath of fresh air. And my Aunts secretly adored these visits; yet they received her often with assumed *hauteur* and a frostiness of manner which would have repelled most people. I think they tried to bear in mind that she represented the World invading their sanctuary, and—that was the crucial point—not even *their* World—for anyone who was not a Stanhope, or related to a Stanhope, or even an early friend of the House of Stanhope, they considered beyond the pale.

And their attitude was but that of most of the old county families, for Yorkshire prided itself on being exclusive, and high and low lived up to that creed that "furriners" should not be tolerated by those indigenous to a locality. Thus I have heard that when Mrs. Clarke arrived in the West Riding as a bride, the old residents

attempted to ignore or patronize her till, one by one, they succumbed to the charm of her personality or the quiet shafts of her wit. Many were the tales in this connection with which she regaled my Aunts.

One day lunching with some of the greatest people in the Riding, the host, who was not noted for generosity, carved a chicken with great solemnity and then handed the drumstick to Mrs. Clarke.

"I am giving you the drumstick," he explained pompously, "for no doubt you, like ourselves, consider it the very best and most succulent part of a fowl."

"Certainly the most succulent!" echoed his wife, who was a very great lady.

"Quite the very best!" echoed her sister enthusiastically, from lower down the table.

Now most people, on probation, would have murmured polite thanks and accepted the inevitable; but Mrs. Clarke handed the drumstick firmly back to her host. "As you all like it so much," she said in her clear, strident voice, "I won't be pig enough to deprive you of it. So I'll be contented if you just cut me a slice *of the very best part of the breast!*"

She was riding back from hunting one evening through the dusk when, in a lonely place, she encountered a rough, lawless group of colliers on strike. They were all birds of a feather, men who bore reputations which would not stand investigation; and as she cantered past they hissed, and a stinging clod of earth, thrown by no friendly hand, spun after her and cut her sharply on the cheek. Another woman thus alone would have hastened on, considering discretion the better part of valour; but not so Mrs. Clarke. She promptly wheeled round and rode back to the group.

"Who threw that mud?" she demanded, reining up her horse in front of the men.

The loafers looked sheepish, but no one spoke.

"I insist on knowing who threw that mud," she repeated. "Are you"—contemptuously—"all too frightened to speak?"

Then one lout outstretched his hand and pointed to a fellow lout: "Jim Barns did ut," he said.

"Oh, Jim Barns?" repeated Mrs. Clarke. "Well, Jim Barns, will you come out in the open and fight me fairly?"

Then Jim Barns spoke up. "Oi doan't foight wi' wimmun!" he said sulkily.

"No," said Mrs. Clarke with deliberation—and I can imagine how she looked at that moment, her handsome face full of scorn and her eyes sparkling—"no, you don't want to fight with women, but you will attack them, insult them, and hit them behind their back when you think they can't hit you again. Now see here, you fellows, this is the way I treat bullies and cowards!" She rode

up to the surprised Jim, gave him two slashing cuts across the face with her hunting-crop, then she trotted away—very leisurely—and not a man stirred.

By and by, Mrs. Clarke became identified with Yorkshire in the minds of high and low; she seemed to epitomize the spirit of the county.

But one day at Banks she "presumed." Aunt Frances by then had had a stroke, and unable to go downstairs she was daily wheeled from her bedroom on a long couch to another bedroom on the same landing, where, in consequence, we all sat. The couch was always placed with its back to the window, facing a blank wall from which jutted out a four-post bedstead. This latter, as a concession to the new conditions, had a dust-sheet flung over the bedding, and gradually it became a receptacle for oddments—newspapers, books, needlework, skeins of wool, garments for the poor were stacked promiscuously upon it; till one day Mrs. Clarke's gaze strayed to it.

"Miss Maria," she exclaimed, "now that you have to use this room to sit in, why on earth don't you get rid of that old four-poster, and turn the place into a pretty sitting-room?"

For one moment the enormity of the suggestion took away Aunt Maria's breath. The room had always been a bedroom, how could it possibly become a sitting-room? Then she drew herself up and turned upon the rash offender.

"And if I removed the bed," she said in a voice of asperity, "WHAT WOULD THERE BE FOR FRANCES TO LOOK AT?"

It was after this visit that Aunt Maria remarked to me confidentially, "I consider that Mrs. Clarke sometimes presumes."

VI

To revert once more to my own little life-story, I cannot say how long a spell of unbroken monotony I had endured when an event occurred to which the following minor incident was a prelude.

I have referred before to my Aunts' jewellery; but besides the curious items which I enumerated they had plenty of valuable trinkets. At the date when they had been in Paris as girls, however, there was a great fashion for imitation gems and marquisite ornaments. Many of these were of really beautiful workmanship; lovely old paste set in real gold, pinchbeck chains of intricate design, seed-pearls fashioned into sprays and flowers. Occasionally they presented me with some knick-knack of little value; but one day Aunt Maria called me into her room, and producing a parcel with considerable ceremony, she addressed me solemnly:

"This jewellery I have been keeping for the first of you who married"—indicating with a wave of her hand an imaginary troop of nephews and nieces—"but as you none of you seem inclined to, I think *you* had better have it."

"But, Aunt Maria," I ventured to suggest; "It's not my fault —I'm only thirteen!"

"That doesn't matter," said Aunt Maria hurriedly, as one who is trifling with conscience, "I want *you* to have it." She fumbled at the paper, and, filled with excitement, I watched her, fascinated. Judging by the solemnity of the occasion I felt that nothing short of a diamond tiara was about to be produced. Then, to my consternation, she drew from an old box the most surprising piece of jewellery I had ever seen. It was a large necklace composed of life-size bunches of glass red-currants, separated by huge leaves of pinchbeck. "And there are these too!" said Aunt Maria in a tone of awe, as she held triumphantly before me a pair of colossal ear-rings, each about three inches long, and consisting of a bunch of glass red-currants with two wide pinchbeck leaves. "I bought the set in Paris when I was a girl," she said, "and I have always looked upon it as my most beautiful set of trinkets!"

I accepted the gift with the best grace I could muster, but my mortification was intense. I was too young to appreciate it on its merits as a curiosity, and I could only picture myself walking to Cawthorne Church on Sunday arrayed like a Bacchante with those gigantic bunches of glass fruit dangling from my neck and ears!

Not long after this present, I heard my Aunts talking French. I have mentioned before that their excursions into the Gaelic tongue presaged matter worthy of attention—if not a tale which gave one furiously to think, then a tip or a gift in contemplation, for although they knew that all their nieces learnt French in the schoolroom, yet like the ostrich with its head in the sand they remained convinced we should never detect their ruse. Thus, listening intently as was my wont, I learnt that the doctor had said that I was unwell; that it was imperative I should have change of scene; and that my mother, who could not leave them, wished me to be sent to London for a fortnight.

By and by my Aunts informed me of this fact in English, and presented me with a cheque for twenty pounds for pocket money. I had never had more than a few shillings in my possession before, and I believed that I was provided with inexhaustible wealth for life. I travelled up to London and back in a saloon carriage, locked in by the old Guard who had known all the family for years, and I gave him a five-shilling tip on each journey with an apology that it was not more. But I did not wear the necklace of glass currants.

In London I had the time of my life, and never again shall I enjoy anything as I did that fortnight's reprieve from Banks. To me it was like coming out of perpetual twilight into the freshness and gladness of day. My sister by this time had left home to devote herself completely to Art; but she came forward nobly and gave me a glimpse of an existence to which I was a total stranger.

There was at that time a beautiful actress about whom all London was talking, named Mary Anderson. Her acting was not remarkable, but her beauty and grace were unsurpassed. So one night, in a bold mood, we drove off to the theatre where she was taking the chief rôle in *The Lady of Lyons*. The place, we were told, was packed, and only in a box almost in the roof could two places be had at the price of stalls; moreover, it was explained to us, that box held four, and if any more people arrived, two strangers might be put in with us. Even my Bohemian sister hesitated, for girls never went alone to the theatre in those days, and to share a box with strangers might have led to unpleasant consequences; "It is a great risk!" she said; but my look of woe when she turned away, decided her; so we went in, and were left undisturbed.

To us it was a wonderful performance. I have never seen Madame Navarro since, and I am told she is unchanged, so I can without thought of envious Time still picture her lithe, youthful grace, when each pose was a poem. The romantic play required beauty rather than impassioned acting; but we were not hypercritical, and every moment of it was a joy to us. When one of the characters in true stage fashion produced his entire fortune from a purse in his pocket I felt it was like my twenty pounds. "Oh," I said to my sister, as we drove home again, and a sobering vision of Banks and the avenue crossed my mind, "how I do *love* the World, the Flesh and the Devil!"

On Sunday Evelyn took me to Leighton House, where Lord Leighton was the centre of a crowd of visitors. "Leyton is a handsome man," I entered in my diary; "There seemed hundreds of people coming and going, and they all buzzed round him. But he seemed to like it, and was very cheerful." Another evening we went to see some theatricals at Sir William Richmond's. Of the actual performance I have no recollection, but I remember being introduced to a very thin and vivacious lady with china-blue eyes and a necklace of blue beads to match, whose name was Miss Mary De Morgan. I also was much impressed by, and not a little indignant at, the fact that when my sister explained to people my relationship to herself, they invariably asked, "What is your sister going to be?" "Nothing!" replied Evelyn with sisterly contempt, "unless it's a noodle!" Yet I smiled a smug, superior smile, for I had been well grounded in the Victorian creed that you could not be a Professional and "a lady" at the same time.

One evening we had a misadventure. We went to call on Madame Coroneo, formerly a Miss Ionides, and as we approached the house in the dusk a man suddenly sprang out upon us from behind a laurel bush, brandishing a large stick. We were considerably frightened, but explanation and apologies followed. It appears that Madame Coroneo had been much troubled by a "run-

away ring," so her butler, with the queer intelligence of his class, elected to lie in wait for the offender on her " day at home," and attacked the first harmless guests who came to call.

One more event I recall. Mary of the Milky Puddings and the beautiful complexion was then staying in London, and took me to the German Reeds. Most people of my generation will recollect those charming little entertainments at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, in which the Reeds and Corney Grain took part. The place was known satirically as " the Parson's theatre," but the little semi-musical plays performed there were excellent of their kind, and there has been nothing since to take their place. As for me, I enjoyed it so greatly that I remember walking home with Mary, wishing from the depths of a remorseful heart that I had never pretended her hair was red ; and I recall just how she looked that day. She had a brilliant, clear colour like a flower, and she wore a white muslin bonnet with white silk strings, and a little bright-eyed, stuffed robin, pretty and gay as herself, perched jauntily on one side of it. And eyeing her, tongue-tied with admiration, I wondered if a lifetime of devotion could ever repay her for the intense happiness she had given me !

But Banks claimed me at the end of a fortnight ; and I had better finish this part of my story.

Aunt Maria died first, one snowy Christmas ; and as she lay unconscious, she kept moving her hands with a curious action rapidly along the sheets.

" Miss Maria has been busy like that all the afternoon—I cannot think what she fancies she is doing ! " the nurse remarked to me.

But *I* knew. On the threshold of eternity Aunt Maria was still cutting out Linsey-Wolsey for the poor. By and by, as I was showing pictures to Aunt Frances—a substitute for the novel-reading of former days—the door opened and I held the paper higher that she might not see. The nurse looked at me significantly. Aunt Maria had finished her work.

Aunt Frances only survived her younger sister for five weeks. Whether she knew that the last member of her generation was gone from her—the last of that once merry family of fifteen—we could not judge. By then, though handsome as ever, besides being paralysed she was deaf, so that all communications had to be written on a slate for her to read, and we believed her to be speechless. But one evening she startled me. I seldom left her in those days, for she depended on me for amusement ; and I had been making her laugh with some foolish antics when, suddenly, I noticed that her poor paralysed lips were moving, and that she was framing a speech. " A merry little grig ! " she said distinctly, nodding towards me, " A dear, merry little grig ! " It was the last time she ever spoke.

Maria Spencer-Stanhope

Frances Spencer-Stanhope.

Frances and Maria when Old.

I think it was actually a break in the routine to which she had become accustomed which killed her.

Her nurse who had attended her for some years was taken suddenly ill in the night, and fell upon the floor of her room unable to summon assistance. The darkness mercifully veiled the sight from Aunt Frances, and there they lay till dawn, the old woman sleeping peacefully, the young one fluctuating between life and death. Strangers were subsequently got in to attend to Aunt Frances; but this second disappearance of a familiar face and the inevitable change of régime thereby entailed visibly troubled her. Even so, the end came without any preliminary indication save a strange coincidence which I wrote down in a little memorandum at the time:—

"Last night I was holding the little book of Evening Prayers before Aunt Frances, as usual, and reading it to her while she followed the lines with her finger. We came to a sentence—'*And since I must soon lie down and die, make me ready—prepare me for it.*' She stopped, pointing to the line and looked at me so strangely as though to draw my attention to it. Then she went back to it again and again, and still pointed to it. I felt uneasy, but she looked so well and peaceful, that I thought no more about it till afterwards."

Yet, that night she died; and she did not die easily. Her vitality must have been strong, for the terrible fit which slew her lasted from midnight till dawn. Linwood, sober for once, was sent galloping off to fetch the doctor, but the snow lay thick upon the ground, and in the pitchy darkness, on the slippery roads, it took long to ride the five miles to Penistone, and for the doctor to drive the same distance back. All through that dreadful night we waited, with two dying women in the house, ere at last we heard the welcome sound of the door-bell clanging through the stillness. But at the very moment when the doctor crossed the threshold, Aunt Frances turned one look of recognition towards me. A light like a caress crossed her pain-stricken face, her hand sought mine, and so, smiling once more at "the merry little grig", she died.

CHAPTER VII

The World beyond the Avenue

I

WITH the death of Aunt Frances, my drab little childhood seemed to end. Yet for weeks subsequently my mother and I lived on in the lonely house, occupied in erasing all traces of the Two who seemed to have stamped the impress of their personality indelibly on every article upon which our eyes rested. There is an eloquence in inanimate objects—in the trivial relics of some effaced existence—unequalled in its pain and pathos. So, too, my mother spent hours destroying the letters which my Aunts had hoarded year by year; till one day she bowed her head into her hands, "It is living with the Dead!" she said brokenly; "all these vanished generations, with their little joys and sorrows, their petty worries, their bitter griefs—and the only record—this heap of discoloured paper which I am going to burn!"

By and by when we returned to London, we found that the threads of life there had been too completely severed to be lightly re-knit. My sister, absorbed in Art, was painting all day in her studio. My youngest brother was working busily for examinations; my eldest brother, more morose than formerly, lived in the country save when he came up to London bent on scientific research, and the "Penny Post" became rampant as of yore. Each had too strongly defined an individuality to amalgamate readily with the rest; each had a life-work which claimed undivided attention. In consequence, my mother and I were usually alone together, and even this companionship was interrupted, for, owing to my continued delicacy of health, I was sent away from London when occasion occurred.

Thus gradually did my horizon widen and I got a glimpse of the world beyond Banks, whereupon I found that it was still the world of small things—of two daily walks, of four daily meals, of hours spent listening to the talk of one's elders with outward respect and inward boredom, of peering back with them at a yet more remote world of greater punctiliousness, greater leisureliness, and whispered, mysterious scandals. Even beyond Banks I found most of that older generation were autocratic; they were self-opiniated; usually they were selfish—despite the attempt of Shakespeare to explode that theory, they believed that Youth existed principally to wait on crabbed Age. Yet they were full of an individuality which we

younger ones reverenced ; and when they told us to do a thing we did not respond " Right-o ! " nor when we felt affectionate towards them did we address them as " Old Bean ! "

Assuredly, too, there were giants on the earth in those days. Railways never revolutionized daily life as completely as motor-cars have since done. Before their advent, while people led more isolated lives, each existence was more self-centred ; each man and each woman had time to concentrate, to develop along lines inherent in them, to evolve eccentricities which to-day would be impossible. There were freaks on the earth in those days. Among high and low in that older generation they existed to an extent which, on looking back, is curious to recall ; for now the rough edges in old and young are rubbed off by incessant contact with their fellows. We aim at being of a pattern—we end by being commonplace.

II

One of the first places to claim me, as of old, was Ecton, which I have before described. For months at a time I used to stay there ; and once Mrs. Isted refused to let me go home for nearly a year. She had no daughter, and she used to say to me regretfully : " Now, if *only* your mother would let me adopt you, there is that violet silk dress of mine which would cut down into a very pretty gown for you." I was shown the garment in question as a bait, but it was a dull heavy purple, and it had flounces up to the waist piped with black satin. Once I got so alarmed at the recurring threat of that dress that I wrote secretly to my mother begging her to send for me home again immediately, and within a few days I was established safely in London.

Yet I loved both the old people at Ecton with whom my days were passed in strange companionship, since one was dumb and the other could not cease talking. I used to think it singularly fitting that my cousin should have married a man so afflicted, for her own conversation never flagged, while her mind worked so rapidly that she seldom waited to finish one sentence before beginning the next, so that often it was difficult to grasp what she was saying. Hungering, as of old, to add to my little stock of knowledge, I used to hide in a shut-up room in order to devour any books I could get hold of ; but with the coming of cold weather and fires, my absence would have been remarked, so that I was forced to sit in the library, where her claim upon my attention was incessant, and great was her indignation when I answered " yes " or " no " in the wrong place in a vain endeavour to read !

Ambrose Isted, my daily companion, was a charming, picturesque old man with one of the sunniest natures imaginable, a temper which was imperturbable and a keen sense of humour. He used to keep in his pocket a little heap of advertisements with which his

wife provided him in lieu of writing-paper, and when any funny episode occurred he would sketch it on the back of one of these in a few clever strokes. In the days of his boyhood the education of the dumb was not so far advanced as it is at present, but he had been taught to pronounce after a fashion which was intelligible only to those who knew him well. He used to go out hunting with the Pytchley when an octogenarian—a rash proceeding, since he could hear no warning voice in the presence of danger, and he invariably outdistanced the groom who had been deputed to keep near him. When, on his return, his wife, who had meanwhile been in a frenzy of terror on his behalf, endeavoured to scold him on her fingers for the scanty care which he took of himself, he would turn away with a merry shrug of his shoulders, announcing with finality, " E-nough ! E-nough, Ma-dame ! " then emitting delighted chuckles of laughter, he would sketch the history of the run or any amusing incidents which had that day occurred in the hunting-field. He was making a screen with some of these sketches which was unfinished when he died.

On non-hunting days he and I used to wander about the grounds like a couple of children, I talking to him busily on my fingers and he trying to reply as he industriously uprooted weeds from the pathways with a spud, or blew down the hollow tubes which he had set amongst the beds as a trap for earwigs. On wet days he would sometimes take me into the hall to show me the contents of a beautiful lacquer cabinet which his mother had filled in the days of her youth. She was Barbara, daughter of Bishop Percy, famous for his publication of the *Reliques*, and she had made a practice year by year of preserving any little novelties which took her fancy —a promiscuous collection of ingenious knick-knacks—toys, belts, ornaments—anything which was the fashion of the moment ; and these objects, which often, at the time of purchase, had been of little interest, and had cost but a few pence, had, with the passing of years, become a collection both unique and valuable.

Sometimes he would tell me a tale which never palled in the retelling, and which he illustrated meanwhile to supplement his defective speech. It concerned a very bald parrot which swung in a cage in the library, having been promoted there on account of a misadventure encountered in the kitchen where it had formerly resided.

It appears that one day the cook was making some cakes privately with which to regale her own particular friends, when she heard Mrs. Isted coming along the passage ; she thereupon called out hurriedly to the kitchen-maid, " Pop the cakes under the cushion ! " and in a moment a pan full of tell-tale dainties was thrust on to a wicker chair adjacent and a cushion concealed it. But the phrase had caught the ears of Polly, who was preening himself outside his cage, and as though possessed by a demon, he

started yelling in an excellent imitation of the cook's voice: "Cakes under cushion! Cakes under cushion!" Investigation followed on the part of Mrs. Isted, to be succeeded by much painful admonition; and the angry cook, at last left alone with the bird who had betrayed her, vented her temper by hitting him with a duster. Polly, trying to escape this onslaught, fluttered away and fell into a pan of hot dripping. There he was badly scalded, and in consequence lost many feathers, with the result that his head became permanently bald. In consequence, too, the cook was dismissed, and the bird, for safety, was promoted to the library.

One day, over a year after, Lord Spencer called, and stood talking on his fingers to Mr. Isted immediately under Polly's cage. Now, Lord Spencer's hair was growing thin on the top, and for a time the bald bird above contemplated the visitor's cranium with bright, inquisitive eyes. At last Mr. Isted, seeing that the bird was talking, innocently asked what he was saying. "I don't know what it means," spelt out Lord Spencer, "but he keeps whispering, 'Cakes under cushion! Cakes under cushion!'" And Mr. Isted, choking with laughter, grasped that Polly, following an obvious sequence of ideas, was sympathetically hailing a fellow-victim!

In those days I again met Daisy and Alice Murray. The former had already grown into a very lovely girl, with a complexion like the bloom on a peach and large, tender eyes like a gazelle, while little Alice, though less pretty, was very attractive. By and by, in the very dawn of womanhood, the latter went to stay with the de Traffords for a ball, and there caught a chill which soon developed serious symptoms. Contrary to all picturesque tales of premonition, she had no sense of danger, and when the family, who were Roman Catholics, came in with the priest to recite the prayers for the dying, she was much amused. "They think I am going to die!" she said in a strong, clear voice, "but I am *not*, and I am going to that ball!" Nevertheless, in a few hours the Shadow about which she used to sing so gaily, had fallen, and her "little life" was "rounded with a sleep."

Another constant visitor to Ecton was Charles Sotheby, an elderly bachelor who was heir to the property through his maternal ancestry, and who interested me on account of a curious habit which I longed to emulate. He used to collect and taste all the fungi he could find about the place, although repeatedly warned that he would poison himself by so doing. "It is all nonsense!" he would exclaim. "Most of them are edible and all of them delicious!" And certainly he never suffered in consequence of this strange hobby. Yet I have heard him cited in illustration of the old superstition that ill-omened are the lands once held by the Church; and of the three owners of Ecton whom I have known, Ambrose Isted never had a child, and his name is now extinct in England; Charles Sotheby, who loved Ecton dearly before his

accession, subsequently seemed to take a dislike to the place and owned it only for five years before his own death; while his successor, General Sotheby, likewise had no son.

Yet to me there never was any blight on the old house which my grandmother, in one of her letters half a century before, had aptly described as being "always full of sunshine, the scent of flowers and the sound of chiming bells from the church hard by"—nor yet on the dear old man, my childlike companion, whose stainless spirit seemed to shine through the eternal silence which lapped him round. On the right of the lawn still stands the splendid copper-beech which was planted on the day when Ambrose Isted was born, and in front of which he used to pause proudly, pointing first to the tree and then to himself, with the observation, "Arty-two [eighty-two]. My twin!" Indeed, the trees at Ecton were finer than any I have seen elsewhere, till in the great gale a few years ago over a thousand were destroyed; and recently, in this connection, I chanced on a quaint occurrence.

I was staying in a distant part of Northamptonshire, many miles from Ecton even as the motor flies, when out driving one day I passed some lorries conveying several magnificent beeches to their grave in the timber-yard. It is always a cause of sadness to me when I see giants of the forest laid low, but on this occasion, as I gazed after the great, stark, pitiful trunks, I felt a melancholy so out of proportion with the event that my companion remarked upon it. Later she came to me with the information: "Isn't it strange—those trees you felt so sad about to-day came from Ecton, and were probably trees you had played under when you were a child! It was quite like Lady Caroline Lamb encountering the funeral of Byron!"

III

It is, however, curious the manner in which accumulated impressions can resolve themselves into one permanent, unvarying picture. There must perforce have been many wet days spent by me at Ecton; yet, looking back, I can see the old place only as a land where it is "always afternoon," where the sun always shines, the flowers bloom eternally, and the bees buzz drowsily in the peaceful garden. When I think of Banks, it is a place where always the snow lies upon the ground and the wind howls as it never howls elsewhere. And yet a third home of my early days remains with me as a country where the fields are perpetually golden with corn, or the reapers are shearing the smiling earth with their gleaming silver scythes, where the sea is blue with autumn sunshine, and the brisk, chill breeze, saturated with brine, is sweeping over brown, gorse-covered cliffs.

One of the first visits which I paid by myself, and which, subsequently, was repeated each autumn, was to my cousins, the Cra'sters,

of Cra'ster Tower, in Northumberland. Their name had originally been Craucester, but with the British mania for clipping all sonorous patronymics, it had been abbreviated, although an apostrophe was retained to show that the centre had been omitted!

The home where they lived was an old Border tower of great antiquity, and beyond the stable-yard an ancient archway framed a picturesque vista of the wild, rugged coast and rolling breakers near which it was situated. The little fishing village of the same name was fortunately well away from the house, for although pleasing to the eye, it was repellent to the nose, as its staple industry, on which the villagers waxed rich, was the preparation of kippers.

Cra'ster Tower was then owned by John Cra'ster, who had married my cousin, Charlotte Roddam, of another very ancient Northumbrian family, the charter of whose land dates from King Athelstan. A handsome, benevolent old man, known locally as "John o' the Touer," he had five sons and one daughter; and the life lived by them in that remote spot, where so many generations of their ancestors had preceded them, seemed to me fraught with a great restfulness. During those sunny weeks which I spent with them, we were pleased with simple pleasures, amused at small jests, contented with the placid monotony of a peaceful outdoor existence. We used to go long driving expeditions to Ford, to Chillingham, to Lord Armstrong's wonderful house in the midst of reclaimed moorland, or to picnic beside some of the old ruined castles so plentiful throughout the Border country; and by and by we would return home along the grand solitary coast singing softly in chorus with a sunset staining the waves crimson on the one side, and on the other an opalescent moonrise over the yellowing cornfields.

All the surroundings seemed to fit in harmoniously with the tranquil picture. Even the vicar of the parish, Canon Osborn (a son of Sir John Osborn, of Chicksands), looked precisely as if he had stepped out of one of Caldicott's picture-books—a type of a vanished generation. His figure was tall and spare, his face was lean and kindly, his coat always presented a curious mossy appearance as though a thin layer of lichen had crept over it with the passing of ages. Never during all the years when I knew him did I see him in a garment which had not that strange verdant hue, and my first introduction to him was characteristic. Looking out of the window at Cra'ster, I saw a quaint figure on the lawn, with coat-tails flying, executing a wild dance with surprising agility for his advanced years. Bewildered, I summoned my cousin, and she unravelled the situation. "I see what has happened—the Vicar, in a fit of absent-mindedness, has, as usual, ridden over the lawn and is now trying to erase the hoof-marks by a tarantella!"

Many, indeed, were the tales with which in those lazy, sunny hours we were regaled respecting the kindly old Vicar's absence of

mind. One day it was said he rode into a neighbouring town, and going into a shop to make some small purchase, he left by a different door, and quite forgot the cob which was waiting patiently for him by the curb. He returned home by train, and indignant to find that the horse and trap had not been sent to meet him at the station, he walked the intervening miles to his home wearily, then sending for his coachman, administered a rebuke respecting the heinous omission with all the severity which he could assume. The man heard him submissively to the end, and then propounded the pointed question: "And what 'ave you done with the 'orse, Sir?" "Goodness me!" exclaimed the Vicar. "Well—well"—with sweet reasonableness—"of course you couldn't meet me—no, of course not! The horse is waiting for me many miles off outside a shop!"

Another tale recounted how he was asked to take the service at Howick and to spend the night with the incumbent, Mr. Green. All went well till the evening, when the Vicar invaded his host's room. "My dear Green," he said, "a distressing thing has happened. I find I forgot to put on my socks, and I have been going about all day without them!" Mr. Green supplied the deficiency; but a few moments later there came another knock at the door, and there was the old man back again. "Oh, my dear Green"—joyously—"it's all right—all right! I found that I had merely put both socks on one foot!" Somehow to-day it is impossible to picture a dignitary of the Church going about contentedly all day with one foot bare and one with double hose.

Nor, at times, were the Vicar's ministrations to the sick less quaint. Once he set off in generous mood to take a bunch of grapes to a parishioner who was ill, but, alas! when he arrived at his destination he found there was nothing left but the green stalk, which he was carrying very carefully—he had devoured the grapes unconsciously as he went along. Original, too, could be his methods of endeavouring to bring cheer to a depressed soul. His wife was a sad invalid, crippled with rheumatism, and one day when we were at the rectory she was very nervous and low-spirited. Suddenly the door burst open, and into the room rushed the Vicar at top speed. "My dear," he exclaimed, "I hope you won't mind. I met Sir Edward Grey in the village, and I have asked him in to tea!" Then he rushed back to the door and held it wide open, saying to some imaginary person without: "Pray come in! Pray come in! Mrs. Osborn will be delighted to see you!" A pause ensued whilst we waited for Sir Edward to make his appearance, till gradually it became apparent there was no one there. Visitors were scarce and the Vicar had invented this plan by which he hoped to rouse the invalid and enliven her—according to his interpretation of enlivenment!

The parish church of Cra'ster was three miles off at Embledon,

where Bishop Creighton had formerly held the living; but in the afternoon there was a service held near at hand for the fisher-folk in a queer little wooden church on the coast. One Sunday, on arriving at the latter place, we found the Vicar and his congregation seated on the rocks watching with interest a white object which looked like a capsized boat floating far out at sea. Some men had gone to ascertain what it was, and meanwhile, in the leisurely fashion in which most affairs were conducted there, no one thought of attending the service till curiosity had been satisfied. So for two hours we sat out enjoying the sunshine and the sea-breezes; and not till it was discovered that the object in question was the body of a dead whale, did we saunter into the little primitive building adjacent and have the deferred prayers. But at Cra'ster that seemed the most natural thing in the world. One could praise God as well at five o'clock as at three, and surely more satisfactorily when one had ascertained that a mysterious white object bobbing upon the ocean was merely the body of a defunct whale!

It may be added that when the Cra'ster fishermen had towed the huge carcass to shore, they regretted their energy, for the monster had been so long deceased that it scented the air in a fashion not to be endured. After two days' worried discussion, they towed it out to sea again, and it eventually visited every village along the coast with the same result, till at last some less sensitive men at Caistor extracted the blubber and burnt the remains.

Once when I was at Cra'ster there came to stay a Miss Sturges, a cousin of my cousins, and she told us of the following curious experience.

Her mother, a widow, who was not very well off, had recently taken a London house in Montagu Square, which, although having a long lease, appeared to her very cheap. Before she and her daughters had been there many weeks, they noticed that letters were perpetually arriving addressed to different names, and they concluded that the house must have previously had a variety of owners none of whom could have stayed for any length of time. By and by Mrs. Sturges began to remark certain unpleasant things. Several times when she went into the drawing-room she felt convinced that she saw people in the conservatory beyond, but, on examining the place, she found no one there. On other occasions she heard voices of people in conversation, but could not discover whence these came. At length she grew so nervous that when her daughters were going out in the evening, she often went to bed rather than sit up all alone. Ere long, the servants also began to complain of having seen the figure of a little charity school-girl, dressed in the costume of a bygone day, who flitted about the house and disappeared when pursued. Miss Sturges, however, scoffed at these tales, and even when her sisters declared that they had seen the strange little apparition, she remained sceptical.

One day she was returning from a visit in the country and her train was late in arriving at Euston. She was worried at this, as she knew there were people coming to dine with her mother that night, and it was nearly dinner-time when she reached home. She rushed to her room, and having sent down word that dinner was not to be delayed on her account, she unpacked hurriedly and after a speedy *toilette* set off for the dining-room. She was running downstairs, thinking only of her annoyance at having to make a late entry in the middle of the dinner-party, when suddenly she heard the pitter-patter of footsteps coming behind her. She glanced round expecting to see one of the servants following her, and to her amazement she saw tripping down the steps a little charity schoolgirl, dressed in grey, with a white fichu, black mittens, and dark hair closely cropped round a pale little face. It was summer-time and still bright daylight, and as she paused, the child passed her so closely that it nearly brushed against her; yet still it did not seem to notice her, and it went on into a boudoir half-way down the stairs. Somewhat puzzled, Miss Sturges at first concluded that the little girl must be a relation of one of the servants; then there flashed across her recollection the account she had heard respecting the little charity schoolgirl whom others had complained of having seen. She flew to the room which the child had entered, and which had no other exit, flung open the door and found no one there!

About fifteen years later I was talking to a lady at an afternoon party in London, when she happened to mention that she lived in Montagu Square. Although I had previously forgotten the story which Miss Sturges had told me, for some inexplicable reason, it now flashed across my memory, and I remarked involuntarily: "There is a house in Montagu Square—I forget the number—which was said to be haunted." "Yes," replied the stranger, "that is *my* house. We were told it was haunted when we went there, and although we never actually saw anything, we were much worried by odd noises, and particularly by the sound of footsteps pattering up and down stairs. Recently, however, we have had part of the house reconstructed, it has been all pulled about and altered, and apparently the ghost must have lost its bearings, for we have never been bothered since!"

Our nearest neighbours at Cra'ster were all Greys—the Greys of Howick and the Greys of Falloden. Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey, and his beautiful wife, *née* Dorothy Widdrington, were then a striking, athletic couple who, report said, thought little of a walk of twenty miles. Lady Grey was tall, with wonderful eyes and a faultless complexion; but one scarcely realized how handsome she was till one saw her beside other women, when she made every one else look plain and insignificant. She was a splendid horse-woman and whip, so that her tragic death some years later, when thrown from her dogcart, seemed all the more melancholy.

Alnwick, with its picturesque castle, was seven miles off, and when I first used to go there, Louisa, wife of the sixth Duke, was still alive. She was always suffering, yet, seated in her invalid chair, dressed usually in pale grey and lavender draperies, she looked singularly serene, and was full of interesting reminiscences. She showed me many treasured family relics, relating some romantic history attached to each, among others the bag which had held the dispatches after the battle of Waterloo; and once after sending me to see the vast kitchen of the castle, she told me the compliment which had pleased her most throughout her life. "I took a poor girl into the kitchen here, who got on very well and subsequently went to other places. Some years afterwards, when she was in Alnwick, she came to see me, and she said: 'Your Grace, there is one thing I fancy it may please you to hear—I have been in many places since I lived with you, but in no other house have I seen so little waste as I did when I was in your service.' And that," said the Duchess, "I consider the finest compliment I have ever had paid to me."

I recalled a gratification of a different type once expressed by one of her predecessors, Eleanor, wife of the fourth Duke. One evening when my uncle, General Stanhope, was dining at Alnwick, Lord Grey, Lord Westminster, and Mr. Harrowby were also present, and the Duchess, turning to him observed, quaintly: "*What* a satisfactory dinner—four garters!"

In the park at Alnwick was Swansfield House where I used often to stay with Miss Isabella, daughter of Sir William Bryan Cooke, of Wheatley. With her was living a cousin, Miss Louisa, who, despite the fact of being a septuagenarian, remained exceedingly lively in mind and body, and, moreover, being stone-deaf, was wholly impervious to the remonstrances of her more staid and shockable relative.

One day at a big luncheon-party there, Miss Louisa began relating how she was fond of rambling about the country in search of ferns for her rockery, and how on one of these expeditions she encountered an old Alnwick mole-catcher, likewise on business bent. Miss Louisa, who no doubt on these occasions dressed much as Aunt Maria used to do when gardening, tramped some miles over the moor with her new friend, talking incessantly, while he interested her—more by illustration than speech—in the intricacies of his profession. At last, evidently thinking her some poor old woman of his own class, when his dinner-hour arrived he gallantly offered to share his bread-and-cheese with her, and finally offered her a "sooup" out of a mysterious black bottle. She had reached this point in her narrative when she caught the shocked expression on the face of her cousin, seated decorously at the head of the table and powerless to stop her confidences. "Isabella! Isabella!" she cried with all the rebelliousness of sixteen, "You look as solemn

as the pepper-pot! Pray why shouldn't I be friends with the mole-catcher if I choose?"

At Bicton Hall, Shropshire, I also stayed with some other quaint old ladies, the Misses Cotes, daughters of the once famous squire and agriculturist, John Cotes, of Woodcote. There were originally three sisters living together in the pretty old hall, as to-day three sleep together in the quiet churchyard. The eldest, whom I do not remember, had been lady-in-waiting respectively to the luckless Princess Charlotte and to gentle Princess Sophia-Matilda of Gloucester, and her mother was *née* Lady Louisa Courtenay. The two younger, Sophy and Emily, who were my hostesses, were the daughters of the second wife, Lady Maria Grey, daughter of Lord Stamford; and they always spoke with awe of their fine elder sister, who had been honoured by the special favour and confidence of good Queen Charlotte.

In the grounds at Bicton was an ancient church, long since closed, but where we then attended service, and it was full of the strangest "loose-boxes," facing all ways, into which the congregation literally disappeared. Once inside one's own particular loose-box, it was impossible to see over the sides and difficult to obtain much air. The clergyman occupied a larger square box in the centre, where he stood on a raised hassock, so that he at least could peer into the other loose-boxes, and may have been able to breathe more freely. An old clerk sat in front of him, whom I recall giving forth a sonorous rendering of the psalm, "Wy 'op ye so, ye 'igh 'ills? This is the Lord's 'ill——" etc. The church, however, must have been insanitary, and at some time the dead must have been buried very near the surface, for on damp days odours—not of Edom—pervaded the place. "I thought," Miss Emily would observe gently at Sunday luncheon, "that the ancestors were very much *en évidence* this morning!"

Bicton was the only church where—unless my memory tricks me—musicians with different instruments still performed in the gallery in lieu of an organ, such an adjunct to worship having been long known to the Low Church party as "the Devil's Whistles." But at an earlier date a species of orchestra was customary in all village churches, and its banishment from West End Church, Southampton, was epoch-making. The orchestra there consisted of three or four old men who respectively played the fiddle, flute, double-bass, etc. They also performed dance music at evening parties in the village. One Christmas-time there happened to be an unusual succession of these festivities, and by Sunday the musicians were fairly tired out, so that all fell asleep during the sermon. At the end of his discourse, the parson gave out the hymn. Dead silence followed. He gave it out again, whereupon the leader of the orchestra awoke with a horrified start, nudged his fellow-musicians, and, still half asleep, all struck up "Sir Roger de Coverley."

Up jumped the squire in his pew, turned round, and, wrathfully waving the luckless musicians to silence, exclaimed :

" For this insult to *Me*, to *my* Family, *and* to Almighty God, you shall no longer play in this church. I will give an organ ! " And he did !

IV

Another visit which I recall was to the Dowager Lady Burrell at Ockenden, near Cuckfield, the dower-house to Knepp Castle, in Sussex. It was a beautiful old house, filled with oak panelling, and dating from about the middle of the fifteenth century.

The first evening I arrived early in the drawing-room before dinner, and was waiting for the rest of the party to assemble, when the door opened, and there entered an old lady who looked exactly as if she had stepped out of a picture-frame. She was dressed in a full gown of black silk, with a filmy shawl of lace, and beneath a head-dress of lace white curls were peeping out on either side of her pretty old face. On seeing me, she made a profound old-world curtsey, which involuntarily I rose and returned ; and then seating herself beside me on the sofa, she began questioning me politely about my journey. At length, when the conversation flagged, I pointed to a couple of animals who were lying by the fire, and made some banal remark to the effect that they were handsome dogs.

" My dear," she said instantly, " they are not *dogs* ! "

" Not dogs ? " I echoed. " But what are they ? "

" I will tell you," she observed confidentially. She leant towards me with an air of profound secrecy, and said in my ear : " They are a species of duck-mutton, and will shortly turn into hill-side sheep ! "

Though I eyed her in perplexity, I could see no smile upon her face ; and it seemed incredible to me that the placid-looking old dame who had been talking to me so rationally was not right in her head. The night following we had all assembled for dinner before she appeared, and the manner of her entry was dramatic. Suddenly the door was flung open and she paced sedately into the room, looking more than ever like an old picture come to life. Then becoming aware that we had all been waiting for her, she stopped, dropped a profound curtsey to the surrounding company till her black silk skirts floated in a balloon round her, and rising, announced herself gravely as " The late Miss Burrell ! "

A few days later I saw her standing in the conservatory gazing fixedly at a beautiful azalea. To her entered one of her nieces. " Why are you looking at that flower so earnestly, Aunt Julia ? " she inquired. " Hush-h-h ! " whispered the old lady, holding up a warning finger. " I am waiting for it to turn into a canary ! "

By then I had learnt that she was Miss Julia Burrell, sister-

in-law to my hostess, and that, although for the most part sensible and given to pretty flashes of wit, occasionally her mind seemed to run off the rails. With her gently distraught intellect, moreover, she seemed persistently to dwell in a world of her own creation —a gracious world where every one was stately and courteous, and where she could combine the manners of the *ancien régime* with the mentality of a child, for all the rough facts of existence were tenderly withheld from her—in her presence all mention of sadness, of tragedy or of death, was carefully hushed.

I heard afterwards, too, that her father, Sir Charles Burrell, to the last had refused to bow to the flight of time, and used to say how confidently he looked forward to the date when " these horrible railways will be done away with, and we shall go back to the good old coaching days." Thus it was curious to note that Miss Julia, with her charming old-world manners and the profound curtseys which she had learnt, no one knew where, likewise dwelt in a past generation and persistently ignored the present.

When she stayed with her brother at Knepp Castle, a special sofa was always reserved for her, and there, like royalty, she summoned to sit beside her whomsoever she selected. Unfortunately, however, she had an inconvenient habit of dispensing largesse in an equally regal fashion. Occasionally, when anyone opened a door for her, she would reward this little courtesy by the gift of a sovereign ; at other times she would take precious knick-knacks which were about the room and present these, like an Oriental potentate, to some embarrassed recipient. Her generosity had even been known to take a more pretentious form.

One day there arrived to stay a girl who in the evening wore a *décolleté* dress with no sleeves. Now, Miss Julia was accustomed to a more modified form of evening-gown, and she eyed the new-comer with thoughtful, worried attention for two successive nights. On the third day she sent for the girl, and received her, purse in hand. " My dear," she said gently, " you must forgive me ! I have noticed that you must be very cold in the evening—*very* cold ; that you have not been quite able to afford sleeves to your gown. So I want you, as a little present from me, to buy yourself a little shawl —a *nice* little shawl "—and she presented the disconcerted girl with sixpence !

One day in London, hearing a commotion in the street and seeing objects descending in a shower from an upper window, Miss Julia's relations rushed upstairs to discover her in an energetic mood. She had seen a ragged woman on the pavement below, and had instantly flung up the sash and begun to shower upon the astonished vagrant all the paraphernalia which lay ready to hand—sponges, soap, dusters, towels, hair-brushes—everything within reach was being thrown out to relieve the wants of the amazed beggar.

Once she sent for her brother, Sir Walter, in greatest distress,

and announced that she had made a regrettable discovery respecting her coachman. "I have found out who he is!" she said in horror-sticken accents, "and you must get rid of him at once!" "But what is the matter with the man?" demanded Sir Walter, mystified. "I have found out who he is," she repeated. "I had suspected it for some time. He is Judas Iscariot, and"—firmly—"I *decline* to be driven through London by Judas Iscariot!"

V

From Lady Burrell's I went on to stay with her cousins, Monsieur and Madame de Gilibert, who at that date were living not far from Horsham with their only unmarried daughter, Mildred, now Mrs. Joseph Addison. Madame de Gilibert was a granddaughter of O'Brien, third Lord Egremont, whose appreciation for art has assembled at Petworth the finest collection of pictures to be seen in any private house in England. Lord Egremont, a gay rake in his youth, fell passionately in love with Miss Iyliff, who is said to have been a great beauty, and the eldest daughter of this romance was Charlotte Henrietta, to whom he was specially devoted. For many years she presided over his household, and when she married Mr. John James King, her father insisted on her living at Coates Castle, in the neighbourhood of Petworth.

In a picture now owned by her granddaughter, Mrs. Addison, Charlotte Henrietta is seen stepping out of her house, a tall, graceful girl, in a close-fitting little red cap, lifting up her white dress slightly to show her small and dainty feet. Grouped about her are various members of her family, including her three daughters, who became respectively Madame de Gilibert, the Vicomtesse de Labrosse, and my aunt by marriage, Mrs. Roddam Spencer-Stanhope. My uncle, it may be added, disrespectfully used to call his sisters-in-law Madame Jolly-Bear and the Viscountess of the Brush!

Madame de Gilibert, *née* Charlotte Wyndham-King, was a personality not easily forgotten. She had a face full of character, and was an excellent raconteuse. "I was not good-looking as a child," she used to say, studying the old picture, "but I believe I had a very fine figure." At the date when I stayed with her she used to wear her white hair turned back over a high cushion like a French marquise, and what enhanced the resemblance, she usually carried a stick; when she told a tale, she gave special emphasis to her remarks by tapping with this stick sharply on the parquet floor. Her anecdotes, even when slight, had value as the picture of that bygone world of which we of the younger generation thought with awe, so stately it seemed to us, so ceremonious, so obsolete!

One of the stories which she told me illustrative of the stoicism of former days made a great and painful impression on me. It appears that in the reign of George III a Lady Egremont with her three daughters received a summons to attend the Drawing-room

of Queen Charlotte. As is well known, the Queen's Drawing-rooms in those days were in the nature of private parties, which were attended only by specially invited guests, whose numbers on each occasion were very limited. Immediately the summons arrived at Petworth, preparations for the great event were commenced. The coiffeur was sent for betimes, and each lady had an enormous erection of hair and ornaments arranged upon her head several days beforehand, so that she was forced to sit up all night with her head fixed in order not to damage the work of art. The journey up to town was next undertaken by the four ladies in a great clumsy family coach, and the conditions of the road were so bad that while passing through Kensington the coach overturned—a not infrequent occurrence in those days. One of the daughters was so much hurt by a long hair-ornament penetrating her scalp that she screamed with pain, but was harshly reproved by her mother. "Re-enter the coach this instant," commanded the latter sternly. "Her Majesty Queen Charlotte awaits the Ladies Wyndham!" The poor girl was forced to obey, and in untold agony went through the wearisome Court ceremonial. Erysipelas subsequently set in, and before she could be taken back to Petworth she died in terrible suffering.

A happier story was as follows. Lady Palmerston, aunt to Madame de Gilibert, was a great friend of the gorgeous Lady Blessington. One evening at a brilliant party given by the latter in Kensington Gore, a Frenchman who was present paid his hostess a graceful compliment. Raising aloft a cup of tea, he observed: "Mes amis, dites-moi, pourquoi cette tasse ressemble-t-elle à milady, nôtre belle châtelaine?" No one replying, he added: "Parce-qu'elle est pleine de bonté (bon thé)."

A vulgar man who was present noted the jest and determined to utilize it personally on the first occasion. A few nights afterwards, at a party, he therefore raised aloft a cup of coffee and exclaimed: "My friends, why does this cup of coffee resemble our elegant hostess?" No one replying—"Because," quoth he, "both are full of good coffee!"

Madame de Gilibert's many good stories connected with the bygone life at Petworth brought it vividly before one. Her mother, Charlotte Henrietta, she told me, was remarkable for a dignified manner and an absent mind. She was very learned and read Hebrew fluently, besides many profound books, so that the common things of existence were apt to be ignored by her. A characteristic tale recorded how, when she first married, she and her husband, on returning from their honeymoon, went to Lord Egremont's house in Grosvenor Place. When dinner-time arrived, the bride descended to the drawing-room and waited for the meal to be announced, but the welcome tidings did not come. At length, waxing hungry, she summoned a lackey and demanded to know when dinner would be ready. "Dinner, Madam?" echoed the man in consternation.

" None was ever ordered, so we thought you were going out ! "

" Does dinner have to be ordered ? " exclaimed Mrs. King in mild surprise. " I thought it was a thing that came up of itself ! "

One day she left her carriage at the corner of Piccadilly and walked up Bond Street to gaze at the shops. She held up her silk skirt in a fashion which must have shown her pretty leg unduly, for a passer-by shortly stopped her and politely informed her that there was a hole in her stocking. " Is there ? " inquired Henrietta with scanty interest, and sauntered on. Ere long, another lady stopped her with the same information. " Thank you ! " said Henrietta again, indifferently, and continued her way. But when near the top of the street a third lady arrested her progress and remarked : " I trust you will forgive me, Ma'am, but I think you may prefer to know there is a hole in your stocking," Charlotte Henrietta's patience evaporated. Drawing herself up, she turned upon the astonished offender with flashing eyes. " And if, Madam," she exclaimed wrathfully, " I *choose* to have a hole in my stocking, what business is that of yours ? "

One day at Petworth she was reading a learned book which required close attention, when a small boy arrived who had been invited to luncheon. Now, Henrietta had an especial aversion to small boys ; moreover, this particular boy she felt was about to interrupt her reading in which she was absorbed. So when he approached remarking civilly, " How do you do, Ma'am ? " she waved him away. " Not so near, little boy—not so near ! " she murmured. But the boy came on. " Not so near ! " repeated Charlotte Henrietta hurriedly. " Keep away, little boy ! " But the boy apparently did not understand, and she felt it necessary to be more explicit. " I don't like little boys," she said. " They have clumsy boots and something nasty in their pockets. Now, what have *you* got in *your* pocket ? "—" Only gentles, Ma'am," replied the little boy meekly, and putting his hand in his pocket, he pulled out and held towards her a large handful of wriggling maggots ready for fishing-bait.

Mrs. King's daughters were as much at Petworth as in their own home. Lord Egremont, despite his notorious faults, was a man of extraordinary fascination whom young and old alike adored. Moreover, he was devoted to children, which was perhaps fortunate as he had an unusual number. Legend, indeed, credited him with having left seventy-two illegitimate children at his death, and it was rumoured that the Egremont nose could be traced all over Sussex. Be that as it may, he was never so happy as when surrounded by young life. " Come on—come on—all the children and all the dogs ! " he would cry, and his grandchildren, the little Wyndham-Kings, flocked eagerly to him, secure of a lively time and of his ready connivance in any escapade. One typical incident Madame de Gilibert used to recall :—

Strange to say, they all loved cheese—presumably because, being considered to be indigestible, it was forbidden to them. Lord Egremont therefore kept a fine Stilton hidden in a drawer in his sitting-room, and, assembling them there secretly, fed them with this forbidden dainty. One day they were all seated round the table munching their peculiar repast, when there came a loud rap at the door, and they knew it was the housekeeper Garland come to collect her brood. In an instant the cheese had vanished into the drawer and the children had disappeared under the table, so that when Garland put her head in at the door, she found only Lord Egremont seated there alone reading. Satisfied that her charges were elsewhere, she withdrew with many apologies, and in an instant out came the cheese upon the table and out came the children from under it!

When Charlotte King was about seven or eight, she went for a drive along the Steine at Brighton with her grandfather, perched up beside him in his high phaeton. They drove to a little house in the Old Steine, where Lord Egremont got down, and she trotted after him. They were shown upstairs to a bedroom where there reclined in bed an old lady called Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had a sweet face and who welcomed them graciously. Lord Egremont seated himself by the bedside and told Charlotte to play about the room; but while she did so, childlike, she kept an ear open for the conversation of her elders, and heard what she was not intended to hear.

"The dear King came to me," she heard the old lady say, "and he went down on his knees to me, and begged me to be a Duchess, but you know, my dear Lord Egremont . . ." Then the two old heads bent closer together, wagging with the earnestness of their conversation, and she failed to distinguish what followed.

Afterwards, when they were driving home again, Charlotte ventilated the question which was uppermost in her mind. "Grandpapa," she said, "why wouldn't that old lady be a Duchess?"

"Because she was an old fool, my dear," quoth Lord Egremont.

But next time when he took Charlotte with him on a visit to Mrs. Fitzherbert, he carefully left her downstairs, and, summoning one of the footmen in attendance in the hall, bade him play with the child and keep her amused. "What would you like to play at, Miss?" inquired the lackey obediently when they were left alone together. Charlotte eyed him critically. He was a tall man, who, she decided, would make an excellent target. "You stand over there," she ordered, pointing to the other end of the hall, "and I'll throw cushions at your head!" And she did.

Her stories of Brighton and of the origin of the first ladies' school there were full of interest; but as my memory may be at fault, it is best to quote from her own account, taken down verbatim by her daughter, Mrs. Addison:

"In those days Brighton presented a very different appearance to what it does now. There were only a few fishermen's cottages from West Street, which led up through fields to the parish church of St. Nicholas. Beyond West Street was the sea, and there stood a small public-house called the Bedford Arms, on the site of which now stands the Bedford Hotel. Adjacent was the coastguard station, and one tumble-down house, usually tenanted by the naval officer in command.

"At one time a certain young Lieutenant A. was appointed to this post, and in this house he installed his young wife and family. Soon by his efficiency and activity he became a terror to the band of smugglers who infested the coast. He perpetually thwarted their plans. Whenever they desired to land a cargo, he was there to prevent them, till at last they made no secret of their intention to take his life at the first opportunity; and his poor wife lived in terror for his safety.

"One day Lieutenant A. went to take an early dinner with his friend, Mr. Hooper, of Portslade, telling his wife that he would be home about four o'clock. But he did not return, and she became more and more uneasy till at six o'clock she sent to beg the coastguards to walk along the path to Portslade and inquire from Mr. Hooper whether her husband was with him still. On their arrival, they found that the young lieutenant had left his host a couple of hours earlier, just as twilight was falling; but it was not till the following morning that they found what they had feared—the body of the luckless man lying shot through the heart on the pathway which still runs by the side of the high road.

"This cold-blooded murder caused a great sensation throughout the district, and much sympathy was roused for the poor young widow and her family. Among others who wrote to her was my grandfather, Lord Egremont, who proffered both condolence and advice. He said that he foresaw that Brighton was a very rising place, and from the salubrity of its air and its being at an accessible distance from London, he thought that a superior ladies' school there would be a success. He recommended her to start it immediately, and in order to enable her to do so, he enclosed a cheque for £1,000.

"About twenty-four years ago there was still living a venerable lady, Mrs. Shaw, of Havant, whose family then resided at Liphook, and who had been one of the first young ladies to go to that school. In 1814, when the allied sovereigns visited England, they stayed at Petworth, and when travelling thence to Portsmouth an accident befell one of the carriages, and she told me that she was sent for in haste from the school to interpret for the distinguished occupants."

Thus arose the first girls' school at Brighton, which was the

precursor of so many others, and no doubt accelerated the rapidly increasing popularity of the then insignificant little fishing village. Other interesting recollections preserved by Madame de Gilibert are as follows.

"There were always a great many artists staying at Petworth, as my grandfather was a great judge of art and liked to surround himself with painters. Among those whom I can remember as habitual guests were Thomas Phillips, Leslie, Clint, and last but not least—Turner. I have often seen the latter paint, because I was always at my grandfather's heels, and as he went along the passage to the rooms set apart as Turner's studio, his slow, sliding step, to say nothing of the innumerable train of dogs that always accompanied him, informed the great painter of the approach of his host, and he then unbolted the door, which he always kept locked against all other visitors. Then my grandfather would go in and would sit down to watch the celebrated man at his work, while I sat beside him. Their talk was very far above my head at my age, but still I can say that I often saw the great Turner paint.

"There is a picture at Petworth which goes by the name of 'The Mustard Pot,' which I understood was a present from Turner to my grandfather. It is a decidedly ugly picture, and one which my grandfather, who was so perfect a judge of art, would have been little likely to purchase. I can, however, tell a curious story of its origin. The first part of the story was related to me by my mother; the latter part is my personal experience.

"My mother told me that once when there were a great number of painters assembled at Petworth, at dessert one evening they were chaffing Turner on his predilection for gorgeous sunsets. At last one of them said: 'A yellow background is all very well in landscape, but would not be possible in our subject-pictures.'

"Turner hotly maintained that since human beings could be descried in a tawny sunset, what could exist in nature could be portrayed in art. The discussion waxed warm, and at last Turner leant forward and, addressing my grandfather, said: 'Subject-pictures are not in my line, but I will undertake to paint a subject-picture with a yellow background if Lord Egremont will give it a place in his gallery.'

"'There,' said Madame de Gilibert, 'ended my mother's tale; but I can personally remember the arrival of that picture at Petworth.'

"I and several of us children were, as usual, in my grandfather's room one afternoon when the servant announced that a picture-case had come. My grandfather gave certain directions respecting the unpacking and placing of the picture it contained in the Marble Hall, and after a sufficient time had elapsed, he got up and took his hat, saying briskly, 'Come along, come along, all

the children and all the dogs!' and then proceeded to the Marble Hall with his customary train. And there at the south-east end was placed the picture of 'The Mustard Pot.'

"I can see now my grandfather sitting down opposite to it and gazing long at its gorgeous hues, then glancing occasionally to the right where over a chimney-piece hung a Titian, the Cardinal de Medicis, and to the left where hung a small Raphael, the Duke of Urbino, as though mentally comparing the work of the three great Masters. No word of approbation or of disapprobation respecting Turner's achievement passed his lips; only when he rose to move away, he muttered: 'No one but himself could have done it.'

"Turner and my grandfather sometimes spoke their minds very frankly to each other. An engraver in very needy circumstances once asked my grandfather for permission to engrave one of his pictures by Turner which was then in the London house. My grandfather gave the requested permission, which he had no right to do, and Turner wrote at once to him sharply on the subject. My grandfather, while acknowledging his error, wrote back: 'You're quite right, but you're a curmudgeon!'

"No wordy warfare, however, disturbed their unbroken friendship, and Turner used to say that he put all his strength into the pictures he painted for Lord Egremont.

"Charles Robert Leslie, with his pretty wife and children, were also constantly at Petworth, and ever most welcome guests. I remember he used to go about the rooms making sketches and notes in his little sketch-book of the old china vases and Venetian mirrors, which were less common in those days than they are now when modern imitations are to be met with. My sister sat to him for Grundelclitch in his picture of Brobdingnag, and he once made a little sketch of myself in water-colours, but I can remember my terror when he told me that if I did not sit still my nose would turn out blue.

"There are two life-sized pictures at Petworth by Van Dyck to which a romantic story is attached. They represent Sir Thomas Shirley and his Persian wife. He is depicted in a magnificent Oriental costume with a huge cloth-of-gold turban suiting admirably his dark complexion; she, with an oval face and delicate features, shows the true Persian type. This Sir Thomas Shirley was frequently a guest at Petworth in Elizabeth's time, for the 10th Earl of Northumberland had a pronounced liking for adventurers, and, moreover, the Shirleys were distant neighbours.

"Three brothers of that family lived at Wisden, all of them bold and daring; and seeing the development of the iron-works in the Weald of Sussex and the facilities which Shoreham Harbour gave for its exportation, they conceived the enterprising idea of supplying distant and semi-barbarous countries with the cannon

and guns which were made in the forges of the Weald. One of the brothers took his merchandise to Morocco; but Sir Thomas went further afield to Persia, where he obtained much influence, was nominated by Queen Elizabeth as her Ambassador to the Court of the Shah, and eventually married the daughter of the Grand Vizier, who was herself allied to the Royal Family of Persia."

But one of the most interesting stories which Madame de Gilibert used to relate was as follows:

One day at Petworth, when she was about eleven or twelve years old, she set off to visit the housekeeper Garland, who had a little sitting-room near the basement, where she kept an alluring store of candies. Charlotte had no intention of walking downstairs—she invariably adopted the more congenial method of sliding down the banisters, and on this occasion she was all ready to start off, and was standing with her little body pressed hard against the rail, and her legs outstretched ready to give the necessary impetus, when her attention was suddenly arrested by the approach of a stranger. The flight of steps which she was about to descend led from a little landing on which were some bedrooms—one an empty room and another occupied by Lord Egremont, who was then seriously ill. But the door belonging to his room was always kept locked, for invariably he made use of one which did not open on to this flight of back stairs.

Great was the amazement of the child, therefore, to see a lady whom she did not know come out of the empty bedroom on her right, and walk straight towards the closed door. She stared at the stranger and noticed that she was very tall, that she was dressed in a gown of stiff brocade, and that she had a curiously hooky nose; but what attracted the child's attention more than anything else was that she was wearing a very peculiar head-dress—a scarf of old lace gathered in a point on the top of her head like the quaint head-dress in which the Duchess of Hamilton is represented in her famous picture.

The old lady walked towards the closed door of Lord Egremont's room, and Charlotte, seeing this, called out to her: "You can't get in there—that door is locked!" But the lady took not the slightest notice. She went direct to the door, which was under an archway, *passed through it*, and disappeared!

Amazed at what she had seen, Charlotte tore down to Garland full of the news. "There's a lady gone into grandpapa's room by the locked door!" she cried.

"What was she like, Miss Charlotte?" questioned the housekeeper.

"She was like Mrs. Bower, the laundress," replied Charlotte. "She had a nose like a beak, and she had such a funny arrangement on her head!" But when she began to dwell once more on the

strange fact that the lady had passed through the locked door, Garland became cross and told her not to talk nonsense.

Shortly afterwards Lord Egremont died, and fourteen years later Charlotte, then a young woman of about twenty-five, went to Paris to stay with his aunt, Madame de Vallemer. Hanging upon the walls of Madame de Vallemer's boudoir was a picture of the latter's sister, Lady Carnarvon, who was depicted wearing a curious head-dress of lace tied in a peculiar way over her hair. Now, the only pictures of Lady Carnarvon at Petworth represented her as a young woman, differently dressed; and as Charlotte's gaze fell on this portrait she stared at it in amazement. "Why," she exclaimed, "that is the old lady I saw at Petworth when I was a child, and she was wearing the identical head-dress she has on in that picture." She thereupon related to Madame de Vallemer the story of the strange apparition which she had seen pass through the locked door into Lord Egremont's room shortly before he died. "Ah, my dear," exclaimed Madame de Vallemer, "my sister came to fetch your grandfather!"

It was when Charlotte was staying with Madame de Vallemer that she met her future husband, Monsieur de Gilibert, who was then in the French Diplomatic Service, and for whom was predicted a distinguished career. At first the young couple lived a gay and interesting life in Paris, till abruptly existence was transformed for them by an unexpected tragedy. The story, as I heard it, was that Monsieur de Gilibert had been on a mission to Spain, where he had endured great heat, and that on his return he travelled in the same railway carriage with a lady who insisted on having the window open. His baby and the nurse were with him, and, afraid of the child suffering from the draught, he took off his coat in which to wrap it. The result was that he caught a severe chill, which brought on facial paralysis and affected his speech so seriously that he was forced to renounce his profession, and his whole career was wrecked.

I must close the recollections of Madame de Gilibert with a more modern anecdote which I recall her telling me.

One day Cardinal Manning was much bothered by a Miss Treadcroft, who kept asking his opinion on tiresome questions. Above all, the lady cross-examined him closely about his views on various nefarious methods which were employed for aiding charity. "Now, Cardinal," she said, "do you disapprove of balls given for charity, or do you consider that the end justifies the means?"

Cardinal Manning could bear the infliction no longer; up he rose and prepared for flight. "Madam," he said, "I have heard that Charity suffereth long, but I have never heard that Charity pranceth!" and lifting up his skirts he illustrated the action by pirouetting frivolously from the presence of the scandalized lady.

And I may likewise close the old-world recollections of Petworth

with one modern incident. Not long since, a party of tourists were being shown over the house when one of them came to a standstill before Holbein's world-famous picture of Bluff King Hal. "Wy— see 'ere," he exclaimed with appreciation and perspicacity, "'ere's Bourchier's Henry VIII!"

The Third Earl of Egremont.

CHAPTER VIII

Bygone Florence

I

SHORTLY after staying in Sussex, I went out to Italy with my mother on a visit to my uncle, Roddam Spencer-Stanhope. His wife, as before mentioned, was *née* Lilla Wyndham-King, sister to Madame de Gilibert, and widow of Captain Dawson. She had only been married to her first husband for three days when he was ordered out to the Crimea, and shortly afterwards he was killed in the trenches outside Sebastopol. She had one daughter by that first marriage, who is now Mrs. Arthur Mure, and one by the second marriage, Mary Stanhope, who died when nine years old.

In another publication I have told the story of my uncle's life and have related how he was the friend and associate of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, William Morris, Ford Madox-Brown, George Frederick Watts, Holman Hunt and other of the Titans of his generation.[1] Likewise I told the part which he played individually in the later Pre-Raphaelite movement in days when Burne-Jones had pronounced his colour to be "beyond everything the finest in Europe," and Rossetti had been "in a perfect state of enthusiasm" over his painting. But apart from his claim to recognition on such counts, he was a unique personality with a charm all his own.

Known to the rest of the band as "Ghouls," he seemed to radiate fun, with his keen but kindly sense of humour, his sweet temper which remained imperturbable despite constant suffering, and his joyous philosophy of life. His letters were pithy essays on men and things, his remarks were a genial mockery of a silly world. Yet, like many an original spirit, his jests, reproduced in print, might lose even the semblance of wit, for it was more the quaint fashion of their utterance and the irresistible twinkle in his eye which seemed to render his whole personality so mirth-provoking, while he enjoyed mischief as fully as any schoolboy.

When I think of him, certain phrases leap to remembrance. I recall him looking round the breakfast-table on Sunday morning and remarking with pious unction: "It is really wonderful what a much better Christian a man feels in his Sunday coat!" And I recall him once, when newly returned from Italy, standing on the

[1] *A Painter of Dreams*, by A. M. W. Stirling, published by John Lane, The Bodley Head.

balcony in Harley Street gazing down in amazement at a contingent of the Salvation Army—then a novel institution and much more primitive in its methods than to-day—which, with an excruciating brass band, was wrecking the Sabbatical quietude of that respectable street by the repetition of a simple ditty shouted in various keys:

> Never run away! never run away!
> Never, never, never, never,
> Never run away!

"So that is the Salvation Army I have heard so much about!" he said wonderingly. "Well"—with growing approval—"it seems a mighty cheery way of getting to heaven!"

Between him and my sister Evelyn there was a strong affinity; their joint love of art, their vivid imagination, and the passion for exquisite colouring so strongly developed in both, formed a link scarcely less strong than a certain wide generosity of spirit and the unfailing sense of humour which they equally shared. For that very reason Evelyn was often the butt of jests in which he played on her prejudices, thereby rousing, first her wrath, and then her appreciative laughter.

For instance, in common with many of her fellows, Evelyn had a desperate aversion to all creatures that crawled or creatures that were slimy. One day when my uncle was dining with us in Bryanston Square, I noticed that his glance rested thoughtfully on her while she sat devouring an excellent salad with an absorption which was whole-souled. She was greedy; she had mixed that salad herself; and it was fulfilling her highest expectations. She had just conveyed a large mouthful to her lips, when my uncle stretched out his hand and exclaimed in an agitated voice: "Oh, *Eve*-lyn!" That was all. But up jumped Evelyn; swiftly she rushed to the window; wide she flung it. . . . There was a lamentable sound of spluttering. . . . Then, by and by, she returned to her seat looking pallid and perturbed.

"What on earth made you behave in such an extraordinary way?" inquired my uncle with innocent surprise.

"But wasn't there a—SLUG?" she demanded, still shuddering.

"*I* never said so!" rejoined my uncle placidly. "I only said, '*Oh, Evelyn!*' You were taking such very large mouthfuls."

And my uncle's stories of the Yorkshire of his youth, told in inimitable vernacular, had a fine sense of atmosphere which would be lost upon a Southerner. I have heard him recount how, walking through the village of Cawthorne one morning, he met a man who had lost his brother overnight. The two, John and James, had been inseparable, and my uncle sympathetically addressed the survivor.

"So poor James is gone at last!"

"Aye," responded John briefly.

"Did yo see him before he died?"

"Aye."

"Did he speak to you?"

The bereaved one looked stolidly in front of him without moving a muscle, as he strove to recall the details of that harrowing death-bed parting. Then he described it: "Ah said to him, 'John, thou art barn to dee.' And he said, 'Aye.' And that was joust what passed between him and me."

My uncle made a compact once with Ward Hunt (First Lord of the Admiralty) that wherever they met through life they would always talk broad Yorkshire. One day, long years afterwards, walking through the streets of Florence, he suddenly heard a loud and joyous voice from the other side of the road: "Aäy, Roddy läad! bëest *thou*!" He stopped in amazement, and a moment later Ward Hunt and he were wringing each other's hands effusively, with the delighted greeting: "Aäy, läad, bout it's glad ah am to see ye!"

II

The reason of my uncle's emigration to Italy was that from his youth he had suffered from a peculiarly virulent and distressing form of asthma which blighted his life, but never slackened his energy for work nor daunted his buoyant spirit. With the curious capriciousness of that complaint, in course of time it had forced him to move from successive homes till at length he found that only on the hills above Florence was it endurable. He therefore purchased Villa Nuti and the surrounding *podere* on Bellosguardo, formerly the estate of Prince Strozzi, who had sold it to the family of Nuti to defray heavy gambling debts. The house still bore the name of its last owners, although the *contadini*, in accordance with their sense of fitness, on my uncle taking up his residence there, insisted on calling it the "Villa Stan-*hoo*-pee," and at once accepted the Signor Inglese as their feudal lord. Forthwith no self-respecting Italian in the household or on the estate would have dreamed of courting, far less of marrying, without first presenting to my aunt the object of his affections and craving the padrone's permission to pursue the romance.

The villa was a spacious, mediæval building, encircling a courtyard where grew massive creepers, and orange and lemon trees laden with fruit. From the terrace, amid the roses, one looked out over Florence drowsing in the sunlight, cut by the silver line of the shining Arno. In the loggia, which my uncle fashioned into a delightful room, the wide windows commanded a panorama of the Vallambrosian hills, where, in the winter evenings, Monte Morello showed purple against a flaming sky. Dotted about on the hillside below were blue-grey olive trees, orchards powdered in springtime with fairy-like blossoms, melancholy cypress-groves, and, here

and there, other villas, embowered in exquisite Italian gardens and breathing an atmosphere of old-time romance.

In my uncle's *podere* grew the grapes and berries from which were made the wine and oil for his table; and there, too, early in the year blazed masses of uncultivated flowers—scarlet and purple anemones, golden tulips with a faint, sweet smell; tangled sprays of lilac and wisteria, Judas trees waving in violet bloom. By day, the scene was enchanting in its changing moods; but shrouded in the mystery of night it had an even more subtle charm. I used to throw open the window of my huge room, which was in a lonely part of the house near a deserted chapel, and in the great stillness I would watch the fire-flies vying with the stars against the spangled blue of the Southern sky, and far away, shadowy and elusive, the dim outline of Florence gemmed with glittering lights.

In the winter months my uncle and aunt occupied the upper part of the house; with the coming of spring, they, with their pictures, furniture and all belongings, migrated into the *terreno* for coolness. Both upstairs and down, however, the height and structural beauty of the rooms made a perfect setting to the loveliness of decoration. Stencilling by Bodley, rich brocaded hangings, fine needlework, mediæval treasures in art and furniture, presented a wealth of exquisite design and colour. And everywhere the walls glowed with my uncle's own paintings in rare Italian frames, from which his calm, passionless angels or gay little Loves looked out amid the tones of pink and rose or gold and amethyst which he loved. Of rare beauty, too, was some of the furniture designed by himself, and executed by Italian workmen under his directions: tall, graceful clocks, richly embossed *cassoni*, and a cabinet in a lovely shade of egg-shell blue patterned in raised gold and enhanced by panels of radiant dancing figures in variations of the same entrancing colour-schemes.

Existence in the great, rambling house, with its mingling of English and Italian habits, and its influx of cosmopolitan visitors, was an admixture of the ordinary life of an English country house with the introduction of certain foreign elements. My uncle perforce had access to the intellectual and artistic, as well as to the so-called élite of Florence society, both Italian and English; and few people came out there, even as birds of passage, who did not try to get an introduction to the Stanhopes and make an expedition to their lovely country home.

The resident Anglo-Florentine society at that date, however, was in certain respects much what I imagine society in a provincial English town to have been half a century ago. It was ruled over by the three Misses Murray, who lived with their brother, General Murray, in the Via dei Bardi; and my uncle used to define it as being divided into two classes—the Celestials and the anti-Celestials. The Celestials were those upon whom the Murrays called, and the

anti-Celestials those whom they did not consider socially qualified to receive this distinction. So exclusive were they, that in one instance I heard they invited a bride to dinner, but ignored her husband, whom they did not consider sufficiently well born to be present at the meal! I do not remember if the wife submitted to the "pride of the Murrays" under such conditions; but I recall being puzzled by the repeated inquiries, on my arrival in Florence, whether the Murrays had called upon my mother, and the respect which an answer in the affirmative seemed to produce.

From the first my uncle refused to be bound by any of the petty conventions which ruled in the little English colony. His own position was unassailable, his hospitality was unstinted, and all were welcome at his house on their individual merits. But the experiment was not always attended with success, and it was never safe to introduce residents in Florence to each other without knowing if they considered themselves to be on precisely the same social level.

Strained relations existed even between the families of the two clergymen of the English churches, Mr. Tottenham and Mr. Tooth, who were respectively nicknamed in Florence the Totties and the Tooties. Neither ever risked calling on my aunt's "at home" day for fear of meeting the other; but once an untoward event happened.

I entered the loggia to find four visitors talking to my aunt, two seated on one side of her, two on the other; and on attempting to join in the conversation, it struck me that this seemed to flag unaccountably. First one couple shot a staccato remark at her, then the other; but general small talk seemed stilted and unnatural, and my aunt seemed ill at ease. The visitors stayed what, under the circumstances, seemed an interminable time; then, at last, one lot departed, and a few minutes later the others rose and took their leave stiffly. As the door closed behind the last couple, my aunt flung up her hands in dismay. "My dear," she exclaimed, "don't you realize what happened? The Totties and the Tooties won't call on my 'at home' day for fear of meeting each other, and by an unlucky chance, they both called on the same day and at the same time, and each was determined to outstay the other. What I have endured for the last hour!"

More peaceful was her connection with the Italian church. Once a year the local priest arrived, in gorgeous robes and with his acolytes swinging censers, to do a civility to the Signor Inglese. He passed solemnly through every room, blessing it and sprinkling holy water, after which there occurred an exchange of amenities with my aunt, and he finally departed with a handsome donation towards the poor of his parish, while she was left with the comfortable assurance that the house was preserved from all evil spirits till precisely the same time next year.

Meanwhile my uncle gave with a lavish hand both money and personal labour to beautify the English Church of the Holy Trinity in the Via Maggio which he attended. He decorated its previously bare spaces, painting for it a fine triptych as altar-piece and reredos, and by and by he parted with one of his most treasured possessions, an exquisite Madonna and Child by Botticelli, in order that he might build a tower to the edifice. This picture was sold by him for £3,500, and we heard that, in defiance of the law, the purchaser had smuggled it out of Italy within twenty-four hours. Sir Edward Poynter was anxious to buy it for the National Gallery, but was unable to do so for lack of funds; and it has since been seen in a private collection in Paris, no doubt purchased for a far greater sum than my uncle received for it. Like many of Botticelli's pictures, it represented the Madonna, not as a beautiful woman, but with an indefinable charm which increased the more one lived with it; and its absence seemed to make a sad blank on the walls of the loggia, even crowded as they were with beautiful things.

While on the subject of the Florentine church, I may relate a curious story which I was told, although it had no satisfactory *dénouement.*

One Sunday, after the evening service, the curate, whom we will call Mr. X., was told that a man wished to see him most urgently; and a moment later a stranger entered the vestry and addressed him hurriedly. He said that he wanted Mr. X. to come at once, and read the burial service over a lady who had died at a villa some way out of Florence. The curate demurred, saying that certain preliminaries must be gone through first; but the man assured him that all necessary formalities had been complied with, and that if he would only come at once there was a carriage waiting.

Very reluctantly Mr. X. consented. He followed his unknown companion, found a carriage waiting as the latter had described, and entering it, they were borne rapidly away. It was dark, so that he could not see in what direction they were driving, and his companion vouchsafed no further information on the subject.

He began to feel nervous, and devoutly wished that he had never come. After what seemed to him an interminable drive, the carriage came to a standstill; his companion got out and preceded him up a wide staircase into a lofty apartment where several people in deep black were assembled. In the room stood a coffin with the lid off, and in the coffin lay the corpse of a most beautiful young girl. The curate was at once requested to read the burial service over her, and with difficulty he complied. Something in the sinister and mysterious nature of the proceedings, in the curious reticence of those present, and in the singular beauty of the dead girl, unnerved him, and he found it almost impossible to collect his thoughts or assume in his manner a composure he was far from

feeling. At length, however, he concluded the brief service ; those present then bade him a prompt farewell ; he was conducted downstairs again, where he found the carriage waiting for him ; and soon he was driven rapidly back to Florence.

But the incident subsequently preyed upon his mind ; he was haunted by a vision of the dead girl, and after a time it so affected him that he was forced to give up his curacy and leave Florence. No inquiries elicited any explanation of the mystery. All that he discovered was that the people whose house he had visited were known by sight in Florence, and were supposed to be Russians. But whether the death of the girl over whom he had read the English burial service was due to suicide, to some infectious illness, or to some cause more sinister will never be known.

III

As I look back on those old days in Florence, memory plays its usual scurvy trick. Quite unaccountably I recall certain people with distinctness ; others of greater interest have faded from my recollection. I recall Mr. Walter Savage Landor principally because I afterwards met him in London when he had just got back from his adventurous expedition to Tibet. There were many who endeavoured to throw doubt on his tales of torture there, but I saw him shortly after his return, and he was then so injured that only with difficulty could he sit upright. Of Mrs. Janet Ross, who recently flew over from Florence, of Walburga, Lady Paget, who used to read her interesting Reminiscences aloud to my aunt, I have but a dim recollection ; yet I remember Mr. Balfour and his brother assiduously playing tennis at the villa, and Rhoda Broughton, the novelist, coming up for one afternoon. I also recall an American coming to luncheon, and in the middle of the meal laying down her knife and fork with a gasp, as she stared up at the portraits on the walls. " I just *carn't* eat," she exclaimed admiringly—" with those cute old guys squinnying down at me ! " Then, stuffing some fried mushrooms into her mouth, she called to her spouse at the other end of the table : " Husband ! This is Ambrosia ! "

The well-known Dr. Steele was then also an *habitué* at my uncle's, and he died in Florence in recent years under curious circumstances. He was having tea with Mrs. Janet Ross when he set down his cup on the table, and observing " *It is a stroke !* " fell back dying. There is said to be only one other known instance of a man diagnosing the cause of his own death in the very act of expiring.

One visitor to the villa who was not always agreeable was Ouida (Mademoiselle de la Ramée). Pathetically hideous in appearance, she was usually clad in imitation of one of her own heroines, and her clothes were, in consequence, amazing. One day, for

instance, she arrived dressed entirely in pink satin, with white satin shoes (which, it may be remarked, looked far more peculiar then when black footwear was *de rigueur*), her red hair hung sparsely over her shoulders, and she wore a green hat. If anyone besides my uncle and aunt was present on these visits, she usually addressed to the interloper some remark of studied personal rudeness. One day she turned to my cousin, Gertrude Stanhope, before a room full of people, and shot at her the embarrassing inquiry: "Why do you wear a dress like that on a day like this?—It makes me hot to look at it!" On another occasion she pounced on Mr. Arthur Mure, who was seated inoffensively at the other end of the loggia, and with complete irrelevance remarked sarcastically: "Is there a MAN in this house?"

One day some friends walking up to Bellosguardo were passed by a carriage in which lay extended a curious-looking figure, with long hair unbound and adorned by a blue ribbon, floating out over a cushion on which her head rested. "Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?" exclaimed a Frenchwoman who was of the party, amazed at the apparition, and was informed that it was the great novelist.

Ouida's villa was usually besieged by her creditors. She owed money right and left, but the small Italian tradespeople were afraid to refuse to supply her with what she needed, lest she should exert the power of her pen to drive the *forestieri* from Florence and so ruin trade.

For the tragedy of Ouida's life, which embittered her speech and occasionally fed her pen with gall, was the contrast between the world of her imaginings and the world of actuality. She had created, and identified herself with, a bevy of beautiful heroines, who lived in an exotic atmosphere of passion, of luxury, and of high-flown idealism. She had the soul of a poet, and in her dreams she soared among the stars . . . but in real life she saw herself ugly, elderly, and tormented by a squalid struggle against encroaching poverty. Her only beauty was her small, shapely feet, which she was fond of displaying; but one day when a friend, Mr. Erroll Sherson, was calling upon her, and she fancied that he had noted the sorry condition of her shoes, she pointed to a hole in the leather, and said dramatically: "*That* is the effect of virtue and poverty combined!"

Moreover, Ouida, as it is well known, had the warm, spacious heart of a humanitarian, which embraced all living things with a profound tenderness. Her devotion to dogs was unsurpassed, every unhappy mongrel or stray cur found in her a friend; but besides, she was surrounded by a number of majestic animals which might have stepped from the pages of her own novels, and by small *lupettos*, microscopic in contrast. The sight of a dog on a chain made her see red, and calling on my uncle one day, she deliberately set free the beautiful half-savage Maremma dogs which guarded

the premises, with the result that the garden was wrecked. She likewise shared with Elizabeth Barrett Browning the belief that plants and flowers suffered when cut or gathered, and refused to have them touched. Along the drive up to her villa boughs grew across the roadway, so that carriages could not pass, and on reception days she had these tied back gently with white satin ribbon.

Someone once told Ouida that she could not write a book which had not some lurid love-interest, so she promptly wrote *Bimbi*—that most charming of children's books.

With her lived her old mother, whom she always dressed in rich, black garments, in contrast to her own more garish clothes. At length the old woman died, and Ouida, instead of giving notice to the authorities and ensuring prompt burial according to the law, kept the corpse—at first unknown to the authorities, and later in defiance of them. Vainly did the officials of Florence rage and fume. Ouida barricaded herself into her villa and defied their threats and remonstrances, till at length a detachment of *carabinieri* were told off to invade her house, force an entrance, and remove the corpse, which by this time was becoming a source of public danger.

Ouida had been engaged, or said that she was so, to the Marchese della Stufa, a handsome young Italian : but the match was broken off, Ouida believed, through the machinations of another Anglo-Florentine lady who had previously been her friend. On an historical occasion the two ladies met at a great reception, where it it is said that Ouida indulged in vehement denunciation of her rival and slapped her face. Be this as it may, Ouida eventually had recourse to the weapon most ready to her hand ; she wrote her novel *Friendship*, in which she painted her former friend in lurid colours, and caricatured contemporary English society in Florence. The Misses Murray were portrayed talking the most amazing Scotch, of which they had certainly never been guilty, while another resident in Florence, depicted in it under the appropriate name of Mr. Silverly Bell, was Mr. Peter Wells. He was an indefatigable frequenter of tea-parties, and gentle dispenser of gossip, to whom clung the legend that he vaunted with pride the number of these functions which he could attend daily, and the number of cups of tea which it was possible for him to consume in an afternoon. Fortunately, my uncle and aunt only arrived in Florence a fortnight after the publication of the book, and so escaped figuring in it.

Other residents in Florence at that date whom I recall were Mr. Harry Scott and his wife, formerly Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck. Her eldest daughter by her first marriage, Cecilia, had married Lord Glamis and is the present Lady Strathmore ; the two younger, Violet and Hyacinth, who then lived in Italy with their stepfather, were twins, and extremely handsome. After their sister's wedding they were constantly asked whether they had heard any details

about the ghostly Mystery of Glamis, and they always replied that their sister denied there being any mystery. One of them, however, told me that when staying at Glamis she had a curious experience. She was fond of photography, and left her camera exposed in the chapel in order to get a good photograph of the interior. Locking the door, she put the key in her pocket, and went away for some time. When she subsequently developed the photograph there appeared in it the shadowy form of an old man with a long beard kneeling before the altar. Yet no one could have entered the chapel in her absence, as the only key which gave access to it was in her possession. I shall have occasion to refer again to the mystery of Glamis.

My uncle had a studio in the town, to which he used to drive down several times a week, and once he invited Mr. Scott and his beautiful step-daughters to tea there. But before the latter were allowed to go into the room, Mr. Scott, in true Victorian fashion, drew my uncle solemnly aside, and asked him whether there were any pictures of the nude to be seen as, if so, would he kindly throw a sheet over these before the ladies entered. "And a few nights after," my uncle remarked with wicked enjoyment when relating this incident, "the whole party went to the Opera of Phryne, and the Italians, who never do anything by halves, had a most realistic scene where Phryne is suddenly undraped before her judges! Certainly the lady wore tights, but it was all very natural none the less, and I would have given worlds to have seen Harry Scott's face! It must have done them all a power of good!"

Once I went to the Opera on a gala night when King Humbert and Queen Margherita were present, and we were told that, although not the fashion on less important occasions, it would be correct for us to wear full evening dress under the circumstances. We arrived rather late when the house was packed, and the instant we entered the doors, we saw that we had been misinformed. In the stalls every one was in morning dress with enormous hats on, and as we slunk to our places in low bodices, with bare heads, every eyeglass and opera-glass in the theatre was directed upon us in the most disconcerting manner. Our attire was considered by the Italians to be the height of vulgarity.

The Opera itself was not impressive. It was so badly paid at that date that singers whose voices could command a good sum invariably went to countries where they could obtain higher salaries. The chorus seemed to me composed of ancient females badly dressed and of remarkable ugliness, who looked as if they might more suitably have been employed as charwomen; while the scenic arrangements were peculiarly crude. In one Act where the prima donna and her lover were supposed to sing a romantic duet in the moonlight, a stage hand came out on the parapet of a cardboard castle opposite to them, in full view of the audience,

and turned a bull's eye lantern on to the romantic couple in order to represent the lovely light of the moon.

I remember hearing that during this visit King Humbert went about the extremely odoriferous streets of Florence with his handkerchief to his nose, exclaiming tragically: "Drainage for Florence —Drainage for Florence—that is what is needed!" And another evil he was anxious to remedy. Although Italy had owed its greatness to the merchant Princes of the past, the gilded youth of the city, despising the old traditions, then looked askance at trade, and, unless they were in the army, considered it *infra dig.* to have any profession. At the levée, therefore, when the *jeunesse dorée* of Florence were, in turn, presented to him, King Humbert, as a useful object lesson, made a point of inquiring from each what work he did. "Niente, Sire!" was the proud answer. "You are singularly fortunate," the King observed once or twice significantly; "*I* am a hard-worked man!" At length he put the question to Ginori, who manufactured pottery. "Sire," replied Ginori, "I have my fabricotti." "Bravo, Ginori!" cried King Humbert, "you are the first man I have found in Florence so far who has anything useful to do!"

While the King was in Florence, an amusing story was whispered abroad. At the entrance to the Cascine was a menagerie, and one day placards appeared all over Florence announcing that a lion had escaped from durance, and was at large in the park. The place was, in consequence, deserted, not a carriage or a pedestrian ventured into its dangerous precincts; and great was the surprise subsequently when it became known that the King had held a review there.

By and by the rumour gained credence that King Humbert had informed the officials connected with the Cascine that he wished them, without actually closing the place to the public, to prevent much traffic there which might interfere with the manœuvres. The officials, puzzled how to accomplish this, had hit on this ingenious plan, and invented an imaginary lion which cleared the place without further trouble!

The Italian idea of sport differs from ours, and in 1896, when the Prince of Naples married Princess Helen of Montenegro, it was said that, during the honeymoon, he and his bride used to divert themselves by going after dark into the Boboli Gardens with a lantern and shooting small birds in their nests.

King Humbert was undoubtedly one of the finest and bravest monarchs of modern times. Wherever there was danger to his subjects he went instantly and took the lead. When the cholera was rampant he was foremost in ministering to the most contagious cases; when there was an earthquake he rushed to the danger zone, and personally extricated the dead and dying. Besides his dauntless courage he was the originator of valuable reforms; and

he was full of schemes for the good of his country when he was brutally assassinated by an anarchist in 1900.

I remember hearing considerable talk about Count Mattei's treatment of cancer. As will be recalled, he effected wonderful cures in cases which had been given over by the doctors; but he refused ever to reveal the secret of his process. One English girl, indeed, whose case was pronounced hopeless by the doctors, was sent to an Italian convent to be under his care, and he cured her with poultices of violet leaves. When he died, however, consternation prevailed at the thought that his precious secret had perished with him, and when it was found that a little bottle of the medicine which he had employed was in existence, it was forthwith sent up for careful analysis. To the amazement of everybody it was found to be nothing but pure water; and apparently the Count's treatment had been a process of suggestion—a remedy to which may be ascribed the miracles at Lourdes and elsewhere, the cures effected by Christian science and many systems of charlatanry. With "faith as a grain of mustard-seed" it is possible to "remove mountains," and it matters little to what that faith is pinned—a bottle of water, a creed, an hallucination—all that is essential is that the mental conviction should be sufficiently strong.

I heard of a curious instance of this while in Florence. A lady there had a maid, Julietta, who became seriously ill, so that some internal complaint was suspected and it was decided that an operation was imperative. But when the unfortunate woman was opened, the doctors found that she was suffering from cancer in a vital place, and that an operation was not only impossible, but would in any case have been useless, as Julietta had only a few weeks to live. So they stitched her up again and, without telling her that nothing else had been done, she was sent home, nominally to recuperate, but actually to die.

About six years afterwards my sister was passing through a village some miles from Florence, when a woman ran out of an inn and pursued her, calling excitedly: "Signora! Signora!" forthwith introducing herself: "Do you not remember the *povera Julietta*, who was so ill!"

Evelyn gazed in amazement at the identical Julietta whom she had believed to be under the sod half-a-dozen years ago, and demanded: "But are you well now?"

"Ah, so well, Signora!" was the reply. "That operation was wonderful! I have had excellent health ever since. I am married to the padrone here and have *due bellisimi bambini*!"

Afterwards my sister saw one of the doctors who had been present when Julietta was on the operating table, and told him of her adventure. "But I saw the state of the patient with my own eyes!" he said amazed. "We all did. The case was hopeless!"

Another incident which I remember hearing discussed, was how in one of the piazzas in Florence during some repairs, it was discovered that a den of thieves had cleverly constructed subterranean hiding-places beneath it, entrances to which were concealed in the little shops surrounding the piazza. At night the robbers used to come up through the shops and commit burglaries in the town, then they disappeared so effectually that the police had never been able to trace their retreat.

IV

To revert, however, to my individual experience at Florence, there were at that date a good many dances and parties for the unfledged and the fully-fledged given both by the Italian and the English residents, although white cloths stretched tightly over unyielding marble floors did not make an ideal ball-room, and one could usually tell a girl who had danced energetically the night before by the lameness of her gait.

Staying at the villa at that time was Madame de Gilibert's daughter, Mildred, who was much admired by the Italians on account of her fair hair and complexion. At the dances, moreover, few English girls lacked for partners, as a firm conviction prevailed among the Italian officers that all English and Americans were heiresses. When a Cotillon or a set of Lancers took place, all the men who had taken part in the same set, although complete strangers to any English girl present, came up afterwards and wrung her hands warmly, exclaiming "Grazie!" with exaggerated heartiness. They thought it was the English custom.

My first dinner-party at the villa was not an unmitigated success. I was sent in with Mr. Vernon, the well-known exponent of Dante, who was a very agreeable man, but my uncle warned me beforehand to remember that he was deaf of one ear. "The man on your other side, I am afraid," he added, "you will find a very odd fellow —I have never been able to make him out. But you will have to make the best of him." I, however, had not been two minutes in at dinner before I discovered what was the matter with the man on my left—he was stone deaf and anxious to disguise the fact. Thus I, a shy débutante, at a small dinner-party where every remark could be overheard, found myself unhappily placed between two men—one deaf of one ear and the other deaf of both!

On another occasion I had a curious experience. There arrived at the villa a certain Oxford Don and Student of Christ Church, a clever man, but peculiar. Years before I was born he had married an aunt of mine; but I can only describe him as an uncle several times removed, for she died within a year of the marriage, and he had since married twice; it was subsequently said that he was diligently courting a fourth wife at the time of his decease.

Suddenly, in the middle of luncheon, he turned to me and

remarked in a sepulchral voice: "My child, do you know that you have *Her* eyes?" I was amazed, till it occurred to me that his thoughts had flown back into the past and he was thinking of his first wife. But the sequel was more surprising. I had no idea that among his other eccentricities was a habit of thinking aloud, and next I heard the following soliloquy: "Nice little girl, very nice little girl! Must introduce her to my son C. (his son by a second marriage). Odd if they should take a fancy to each other! Stranger things have happened! Most romantic! Must see about it." Then addressing me without apparently any alteration of tone: "Have you seen my son C.? Oh, you *would* like him! He's an extraordinarily fine fellow"; etc, etc. I may add that this projected meeting never took place.

It was the custom at the villa for us all to breakfast in our respective rooms; but Mildred and I, feeling that a meal was more sociable if shared, decided to have ours together. So every morning at the appointed time, I traversed the long corridors, ascended and descended the staircases which intervened between her room and mine, and we picnicked by her window looking out on the rose-garden below.

Having healthy, youthful appetites, however, we found the regulation foreign breakfast of an egg, a roll and coffee, extremely dull and not altogether satisfying, so on our expeditions into the town we used to lay in a secret hoard of good things to supplement this—a promiscuous selection of potted meat, sausages, chocolates and jam. Above all things we had a weakness for apricot jam, and large pots of this delicious delicacy were smuggled home successfully and devoured in privacy by us with great gusto.

One day, on opening a 3-lb. pot, the contents of which we had been much looking forward to, we found to our indignation that it was all coated with green mildew and quite uneatable. So on the next occasion when we were sent down to Florence in the carriage without my aunt, we secreted the pot once more under the carriage rug, unobserved even by "Cockey," my aunt's charming old beak-nosed *cocchiere*, who had a face very like an amiable parrot.

The jam had been purchased at a very smart confectioner's, one of the largest shops in Florence, and *en route* I asked nervously: "Mildred, do you think you know enough Italian to row the man?"—"I have my sentences all ready," she replied, with dignity; and, arriving at our destination, with a very straight back, she sent boldly for the manager, then dived beneath the rug to pick up and exhibit to his obsequious gaze the cause of our complaint. Unfortunately she forgot that the pot had been opened and also she lifted it with the wrong end uppermost. In a moment, on to the spotless blue carpeting of the victoria there slithered with an ominous *plump* 3 lb. of apricot jam. And Cockey stirred inquisitively upon his box!

Pink with agitation, but with great presence of mind, Mildred dashed the rug completely over the filthy mess at our feet, and called out hurriedly "Avanti! avanti! Subito!" Anything to escape from the courteous, pompous shopman to whom we could give no reason for our visit, since the mildew and the jam lay together in one indistinguishable mass. But, as we were driven away rapidly from the mystified Italian, we looked at each other, speechless with dismay. How were we to get rid of the evidences of our crime? And meanwhile Cockey kept stirring uneasily on his box, casting cautious glances with beady eyes back into the vehicle, where he felt instinctively all was not well with the two Signorine, who were, after all, little more than bambine.

After reflection, we drove to a stationer's and purchased some newspapers, then, during a miserable drive in the Cascine, we cautiously shovelled up and ladled out consignments of apricot jam. Each time a small portion of this, wrapped up in newspaper, was cast by us upon the roadway, we feared that Cockey might "draw up" and fetch the parcel we had dropped. At last we had got rid of the whole loathsome mess; yet, rub as we would, the stickiness adhered to the carpet and we dreaded the *dénouement*. But whatever Cockey found on that blue carpet, he was what the modern girl would call "a real sport," and he never told.

Indeed, the gentle, beak-nosed Cockey regarded us with an interest which was fatherly. One Sunday, Mildred, who I think had partaken of some unripe fruit earlier in the day, was seized during the afternoon service with racking pain. Unable to endure her sensations she left the church, accompanied sympathetically by myself, and we sat outside in the carriage, waiting longingly for the time when my aunt would issue forth and we could drive home. Ere long I noticed that Cockey was fidgeting on his box while he cast side-glances towards Mildred with her face of woe; and at last, unable any longer to contain his commiseration, he turned round and inquired in a voice of profound interest: "*E lo Stomaco?*" "Si, Si!" responded Mildred hurriedly; and Cockey with an expression of distress which almost equalled her own, murmured sadly: "Ah, poverina!"

One other misadventure I may add, because it represents my aunt in a characteristic light, though it will be most appreciated by those who knew her, with her unfailing *bonhomie*, and her graphic manner of describing an incident.

Mildred and I, as an inevitable sequence of youth, were very full of our own opinions in those days, and convinced that our elders, compared with ourselves, were ignorant and unenlightened. Thus it befell that writing to a friend one day, Mildred indulged in a somewhat frank analysis of our joint aunt; and going away, rashly left the unfinished letter in the blotting-book in the loggia.

A little later, seated by the fire there, I observed my aunt smiling

to herself with a whimsical smile. By and by, she laid down her embroidery and spoke.

"My dear," she confessed, "I don't know why it is, but when I see a letter lying about I must read it! I know I oughtn't to—no doubt it's very wrong of me—but I warn you, don't leave letters lying about if you don't want me to see them! A little time ago I went to the blotting-book, and there I found a letter which Mildred had been writing to a friend. So I looked at it, and in it she described me something like this:

"I wish you knew Aunt Lilla. I wonder what you would think of her. She is very narrow, very full of silly prejudices, and of course thinks she is always in the right and every one else all wrong. But she is very good-hearted; and take her all round she is really not a bad old thing."

"I am very glad," said Aunt Lilla, with unruffled amiability, "that however foolish and narrow my nieces may find me, they at least think I am not 'a bad old thing'!"

During Lent in Florence we, of course, followed the prescribed routine well-known to every sightseer. On Holy Thursday we visited seven churches, all of which were crowded; and we attended the *Tenebrae* service in the Duomo, and listened to the clatter of rods, representative of the scourging, as the last light was extinguished. On Good Friday we drove to Grassina, seven miles off, to witness the usual procession, of which I find the following account:

"We started at 6.30 p.m. and did not return until 10 o'clock. It was a lovely drive through the hills round Florence, which we left by the Porta San Nicolo. Thousands of contadini had come in to Grassina from the neighbouring villages and every single house and villa and shop was illuminated with candles and decorations.

"The procession was about three quarters of a mile long. First came the Roman soldiers on horseback, then men carrying the cross, the nails, the spear, and the garment of Christ; then girls all in white bearing candles, and boys with torches carrying the crown of thorns, the scourge, etc. At last the dead body of Christ borne on a bier by eight men under a canopy, preceded by a priest and followed by about fifty men-choristers in white robes chanting a most weirdly beautiful dirge. Then followed more candle- and torch-bearers, and finally a military band. They presented a wonderful appearance as the procession wound round the hills through the village, passing by the rustic bridge over the river in which the lights of the candles and torches were reflected.

"We drove back through Florence by night along the Arno, where the city is dimly lighted, and had a cosy supper on our return. As my aunt was using the carriage to-day, we went in a hired vehicle, and found to our surprise that our driver was called *Pilate*!"

Another entry in the diary relates:—

" Lady Edith Adeane at luncheon to-day told us the following conversation which she overheard in the Uffizzi. A student was copying one of the most famous Old Masters when the guide thus arrested the steps of a tourist whom he was conducting round.

" *Guide* (waving his hand towards the canvas) : ' In this case you will observe that the copy is finer than the original.'

" *Tourist* : ' Yes, yes—I see it is ; but ' (with fine discrimination) ' you must make some allowance for the dirt of years on the old 'un ! ' "

A house near to Villa Nuti on the hill of Bellosguardo was the villa Montauto, then occupied by Lady Hobart, but at one time the residence of Robert Browning and his wife. Their only child Pen was still living in Italy, and I may insert an account of a visit paid to him later by my husband when he was staying at Villa Nuti and drove over to the Villa Guido with my cousin Gertrude Stanhope.

" In the afternoon," he relates, " we drove eight miles into the country to call on Pen Browning. The road lay through the Apennines, among vineyards and cypress groves and pine-woods, past beautiful old chateaux and picturesque old Monasteries. By and by we got out to walk, and picked wild, yellow tulips smelling like lilac, till at last, high up on the hills, we found the Villa Guido, in a glorious position ; and there we had a curious experience.

" Pen was out, but the Italian housekeeper invited us in and bade us roam about at large while she prepared tea. We explored all the Browning relics—pictures, books, etc., together with Pen's sculpture and paintings, principally life-sized studies of the nude. Suddenly we emerged into the garden, and I shall never forget the scene which burst upon our sight. A troupe of beautiful white Maremma dogs came bounding towards us, followed by eight dachshunds, all barking furiously so that we thought we should be torn in pieces. Above the pandemonium which these created, arose the discordant music of innumerable birds whose plumage lent an Eastern brilliance to the surroundings. Stately peacocks were sunning themselves on the marble steps. Here and there in the little orange trees apes could be seen chattering and watching us with inquisitive eyes, while on tall stands were perched an avenue of sixteen mackaws, besides cockatoes and vivid-hued parrots, all preening themselves in the sunshine and uttering shrill cries. The whole was like a vision from the Arabian Nights.

" After a time, the beautiful dogs grew friendly, the peacocks perched placidly on the wall in all their gorgeousness, and snow-white pigeons flew round us in flocks, as we sat on the edge of a marble fountain where goldfish swam.

" Then a delicious tea appeared with many dainties ; and later we climbed the truly grand tower which Pen has built on to the Villa, where we looked out upon a superb view with the Duomo

and Campanile in the distance, while all the land was lit up by a splendid sunset."

Robert Browning used to say, "The name of Browning will live—not through my verses, which will be forgotten, but through Pen's Art."

After Pen's death a number of his great canvases were sold by auction in London, and I remember seeing in the Evening Paper that the price they had fetched averaged sixteen shillings apiece, and this despite the fact that they were, for the most part, in good Italian frames. That insignificant paragraph, in a remote corner of the paper, seemed fraught with irony when one recalled Browning's confident prediction respecting the verdict of posterity on Pen's Art. But Browning never was disillusioned in regard to his son. "He has fulfilled our highest expectations," he used to say; and despite Pen's lax morality, he spoke of his son's marriage as "the most perfect romance."

While on this subject I may append a few stories of both Robert Browning and Tennyson, some of which I have heard my uncle tell, and some of which were told to me by personal friends of both, one being Mr. Maurice, son of Frederick Denison Maurice, and brother-in-law to Octavia Hill.

My uncle used to say how Tennyson, farouche in manner, was always annoyed at Browning's respect for, and adherence to, the correctitudes. "Browning never will be happy unless he can go to Heaven in a dress coat and white tie!" Tennyson declared; yet the poet personally delighted in being lionized by the Society beauties who frequented Little Holland House, and who used to wait on him with persistent adulation. Nevertheless, there were times when the admiration of the multitude became oppressive to him.

One day at a garden-party where my uncle was present, every one was following Tennyson about and gaping at him in a manner which bored him exceedingly, till finally he found himself the centre of an admiring ring from which escape seemed impossible. Suddenly he saw among the throng the famous Mrs. Weldon, and extending his arm to her, he exclaimed mock-dramatically: "Wilt thou fly with me to Araby the blest?" As, entering into the situation, she took the proffered arm, the onlookers, seeing genius in this sally of their lion, laughed appreciatively; and only later did they discover that Tennyson had indeed fled—possibly not to Araby—but anywhere to escape from their unwelcome attentions!

Tennyson was amongst those who protested most vehemently when railways were introduced into the Isle of Wight, and declared that they would ruin the peace and enjoyment of the country. "Ah, my dear Tennyson," said Browning, "if you want real peace and quiet, and to be interfered with by nobody—you must live in London!"

An odd coincidence connected with Tennyson's two country homes, was that in Sussex his doctor's name was Dr. Whiting, and in the Isle of Wight he was attended by Dr. Salmon.

Browning frankly admitted, what was always surmised, that he did intend "Sludge, the Medium," to depict the notorious Home. He said that Home was well aware of this fact and was furious, but at first affected complete nonchalance, and tried to avert suspicion by saying that Browning was devoted to him. Afterwards he took his revenge by circulating the following tale. He said he was at a séance with Browning and several other celebrities; there was a materialization, and the apparition was asked to place a wreath on the head of the greatest poet present. *Thereupon a wreath was placed on the head of Mrs. Browning; but Browning grabbed at it furiously and knocked it off!* Browning himself retailed this fabrication with much amusement to Mr. Maurice.

The story, however, sounds *ben trovato* which was current in Florence that Browning was asked to explain some intricate passage in one of his own poems, and replied: "How should I know? You had better ask the Browning Society!"

When Ruskin was ill, he was talking to Browning one day, and he said pathetically, "Things go out of my head so, now!"

"Ah," said Browning gently, "but just think how many things have gone out of your head into other people's!"

Another instance of Browning's tactfulness was related to me by Miss Pember, to whose father's witty duel with Lord Grimthorpe I have before referred. At her first dinner-party, when a shy girl of seventeen, she was sent in to dinner with Browning. "I was very nervous," she told me, "at being paired off with such a celebrity, and wondered what I could talk about. But Browning opened the conversation by remarking: 'Well, I suppose now, like most young ladies, you are looking forward to Commem. Week, and hoping to have a lot of dancing?' I hesitated. I feared that the great man would think me beneath contempt if I admitted such frivolous propensities, and I longed to say that I despised dancing and delighted in poetry; but truthfulness prevailed. 'Oh,' I exclaimed ecstatically, 'I should think I *am* looking forward to it—I simply adore dancing!' Browning seemed to have read my thoughts, for he laughed. 'Ah,' he said, patting me on the back, 'I am glad to have met one girl who is not afraid to speak the truth!'"

Tennyson once complained to Browning that he did not write in musical language. "*I* can write pretty wishy-washy stuff as well as you, if I choose!" Browning replied; and he wrote "Evelyn Hope" to prove that he could write musically.

I have heard my uncle say how another poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne, then a brilliant young undergraduate, used to come day after day, to watch the merry band of Pre-Raphaelite

painters when they were working at the Union. To this an entry written by me in 1906 presents a somewhat pathetic contrast, though it serves to illustrate the different fashion in which poets may render their own compositions.

"Swinburne is deaf; but on being told what topic the people around him are discussing, he will join in the conversation with animation, expressing his views at great length. He reads his own poetry in a chant, laying stress on the words which rhyme. He considers that all verse should be read thus, and that to read it, according to the accepted fashion, as though it were prose, is ridiculous. 'What object is there,' he says 'in a poet studying the music of rhyme if his readers are to go to the trouble of transforming it into blank verse?'"

In regard to the fashion in which poetry is interpreted by certain prosaic spirits, Mr. Frederick Denison Maurice—so his son told me—once received a letter from a critic of matter-of-fact tendencies, who observed:

> "Of course Shakespeare never wrote:
>
> 'Books in the running brooks, sermons in stones.'
>
> "Obviously, what he wrote was:
>
> 'Stones in the running brooks, sermons in books.'
>
> "But what he meant by 'Tongues in trees' I do not know!"

A story of some later poets is perhaps little known. Coleridge, Sir Walter Scott and several others being at a party together, it was proposed that a copy of verses should be written to which each person present should contribute one line. The paper being handed first to Coleridge, he wrote

'Adam was formed in innocence, but he——'

And handed the paper to Sir Walter Scott, who wrote—

'Would have remained in innocence, *but she*——'

CHAPTER IX

Autres Mœurs

I

AT length the time came for me to join the fully-fledged. The last entry in the black leather copybook of my childhood is as follows:

THOUGHTS ON BEING PRESENTED

My mother rebukes me and frowns
With a shake of her head and a shrug,
Because I say that in a dress of white satin
I'll look like an ugly brown slug!

She sighs and remarks, "It is strange
And a most inexpressible fad
To be thus supposin' when you're such nice clothes in
You'll look so disgustingly bad!"

My complexion is "strawberries and cream,"
As my mother undoubtedly shows;
But the "cream" must have turned unaccountably sour
And the "strawberries" all gone to the nose!

The memory of the dull Victorian Drawing-rooms still lingers in the minds of the older generation, but is already becoming a matter of history to those who are younger; so that a brief description of one may not be without interest. The mere fact of being dressed in a low bodice and incongruous finery on a bleak spring morning was in itself sufficiently depressing when, fortified by a few sandwiches, I set off with my mother on that dreary pilgrimage about 11 a.m.; and the subsequent time spent in the Mall was not exhilarating. For a couple of hours at least we were wedged in the queue of waiting vehicles while a singularly frank and unceremonious crowd of onlookers walked to and fro to stare at us, unchecked by the police, some of them even poking their heads boldly right into the windows of the carriages, and making audible, and usually disparaging, personal remarks respecting the occupants, as though these latter were unconscious dummies.

After the long ordeal of waiting under such conditions, the refuge of Buckingham Palace was welcome; but the unlighted rooms looked cold and dreary; neither food nor music were provided, nor extra seats beyond the usual furniture of the rooms. Hungry and shivering, we mustered near the fire, talking to friends, and gradually passing from room to room till finally we entered the

Presence. This, when attained, afforded a singularly unimposing climax. We came upon the Queen and her entourage abruptly, standing near the door at which we entered. To my short-sighted eyes there seemed a row of figures much like a group at Madame Tussaud's, with a little space in front of them up which we hastened. It was essential to curtsey to each member of the Royal Family in that row, and having performed one obeisance after another till one's knees gave way, the next manœuvre was to sidle out of the door opposite without turning one's back on the line of Royalties, while the Lords-in-waiting manipulated the heavy train of solid brocade three-and-a-half to four yards in length, so that one did not tumble over it. The whole proceeding was ungraceful; and it is wonderful that, in endeavouring to execute such a feat of agility, frightened débutantes and infirm old ladies did not trip over their unwieldy garments and fall prone before the Queen or her representative.

Queen Victoria latterly never remained long at any of these functions, for the fatigue was too great. I was told she had a seat like a prop concealed behind her to provide some rest and support, but she appeared to stand the whole time, and made a deep obeisance to each lady who passed before her. Meanwhile all who attended had to be clad in rigid accordance with the prescribed rules; and my mother told me that once she saw an old lady in front of her stopped in the ante-chamber and, after a brief parley, a trimming of lace ruthlessly ripped off her bodice by one of the Lords-in-waiting —she was not sufficiently *décolletée* to pass before the Queen.

One slightly enlivening incident indeed happened at my own presentation. The cards with our names inadvertently got exchanged at the last moment, and I heard my mother announced as myself while I followed as her mother. After that, still starving and frozen, we waited two hours for our carriage, and thought ourselves fortunate to get home in time for a "Drawing-room tea," when friends came to stare at us in our discomfort.

And while the Victorian Drawing-rooms seem events of long ago, in like manner the Great War has made an appreciable gap between a not very remote past and the present, so that already it is of interest to draw comparisons between the customs of to-day and the fads and foibles of that vanished period.

I soon discovered that all independence of thought or action was looked at askance in that new World where I found myself, and this in curious contradistinction to the ideals of that World to-day, when originality carried to the verge of eccentricity is regarded as the one asset which counts. Yet the girls of that date were considered greatly emancipated by the older generation, while the petty restrictions which then hedged us round now seem incredible to look back upon.

Chaperons were, of course, essential everywhere and for every-

thing, unless one was prepared to risk that terrible verdict which, for women, was expressed in the phrase " bad style," and for men " bad form." Long after I was grown up, when I went across to the Square, the entrance to which was only a few yards from our house, the butler was still sent with me, as in my childhood, to unlock and re-lock the gate, and I had to tell him at what time to fetch me back. Girls could not go for a walk together in the fashionable part of the park unattended by a married woman or a lady's maid ; and often I have stood sadly on the dull side of the road at Stanhope Gate, watching eagerly for the chaperon who had promised to come and failed.

One day, another girl, a stranger, similarly circumstanced, after gazing wistfully across the road at the gay throng which we both longed to join, turned in desperation to me : " I am sure," she said, " we both look supremely respectable ! Don't you think we might cross the road together ?—for I am certain directly I get to the other side I shall see some friends I can tack on to."

" So shall I ! " I replied ; and, shamefacedly, we exchanged our mothers' cards to give a semblance of formality to the proceeding, as, greatly daring, we risked the adventure. We were respectively rewarded by each netting a chaperon successfully, nevertheless we felt our conduct to be reprehensible ; and this was borne in upon me all the more in view of the fact that a friend of mine was never even allowed to stand at Stanhope Gate : on the rare occasions when her mother did not accompany her, she was directed to wait carefully outside the park, in the safe seclusion of a growler, till her chaperon had actually appeared.

Situated as I was with brothers who hated society and my mother who was not strong, my difficulties were increased, and often attendance at a party necessitated so much arranging that I felt it little worth the trouble entailed. Moreover, the return home constituted a fresh problem. The first time I drove back in a hansom from an afternoon " tea," my mother anxiously explained to me that in her day it would never have done for a girl to be seen in a hansom alone—and to drive in a hansom with the doors open was then considered so fast it would have put the perpetrator beyond the pale ! " Of course," she said, " it is quite possible that it may be done now—the world moves on ; but still I don't like the idea of your driving in a hansom alone ! "

The next time I returned from a tea at which she had not been present, she asked me, " How did you get back ? "

" Oh," I explained naïvely, " I came in a hansom, but it was all right, for this time I had a man with me ! " I felt it unreasonable when she looked even more dissatisfied.

The return from balls at night presented a still greater difficulty. I soon found that when the carriage was sent for me it was a nuisance. If the entertainment was boring and I wanted to go home early, I

then had to wait wearily till the hour which had been pre-arranged for my return; if, on the contrary, I was enjoying myself and wished to stay on, I could not do so for fear the horses caught cold. So at last I pleaded to be allowed to come home in a cab, and permission was given on condition that the butler called for me and brought me safely back.

Now at that time we had a young butler whom I will call Larkin, who had been manservant to one of the masters at Eton. He was a smart, good-looking man and had been a great favourite with the boys in his master's house, so much so that, joining in their pranks, acting as their friend in difficulties, taking part in their games, he had thoroughly identified himself with their life. He thought there was no place in the world like Eton, and viewed everything from the Eton standpoint—in short, he was much more of an Eton boy than a butler. "He has been thoroughly spoilt!" my mother used to say, with suppressed amusement, when Larkin was guilty of some more than usually flagrant breach of the accepted conventions for a butler, which demanded that he should be a mere automaton, *sans* eyes, *sans* ears, *sans* any expression of individual opinion. Yet she found that it was impossible not to like the man, with his irrepressible *joie de vivre* and his ingenuous attitude towards his employers, which was summed up in his own phraseology as "No offence meant and none, I'm sure, taken."

Larkin's idiosyncrasies stood me in good stead when he was sent to escort me to or from parties. Instead of waiting for me outside, among the other menservants, with a long face and an air of martyrdom, he soon explained his point of view to me. "It is much better for me to go with you, and stay all the time, miss," he said, "then you see I'm on the spot whenever you want to come away."

"But Larkin," I objected, "you cannot wait in the street all night!"

"Wait in the street all night!" with an infinite note of scorn. "No, miss, I'll wait inside. There's always heaps to be done at them parties, and they're glad enough of a smart, handy man like meself. Besides, I enjoy the fun!"

I left it at that; and forthwith at every party I went to, Larkin figured in the thick of the fray. "I knew you were here to-night," my partners used to say to me, "because I saw your chaperon." And Larkin's presence had material advantages. When I went down to supper there he was in the supper-room, debonair and smiling, waiting to attend to me, and with various delicacies stowed away in reserve.

"Here's a table I've kep' for you," he would say, indicating a seat which I knew he had been guarding like a dragon, "and"—*sotto voce*—"I've put away a special bottle of champagne. The champagne here to-night"—confidentially—"ain't much, but

there's a little of a better brand for the specials, so I took the precaution to put a couple of bottles away under the table till you come, and I've put one or two dishes away there which I thought looked good—I was afraid they'd be eat up before you come down."

Occasionally when I wanted to go home, however, Larkin demurred: "Couldn't you contrive to put up with it a little longer, miss?" he would say wistfully. "We *are* enjoying ourselves so!"

Or it might be that Larkin had got into the coat-room, where he doubtless picked up many tips; and the following day, his confidences were not to be suppressed. "I didn't think much of the ball last night, miss," he would say to me sometimes disparagingly, "very few of the gentlemen was at Eton!" or "There was a good class there last night, miss, nearly all Eton gentlemen, and knew some of my friends!" For Larkin had one standpoint by which he judged the social status of every man, and the question, "*Was you at Eton, sir?*" was always a test from which, in his estimation, there was no appeal.

In the coat-room, however, Larkin was inclined to play eavesdropper, and it was difficult to ignore his subsequent revelations. "At that ball we was at last night, miss," he said one day, lingering after he had brought in the tea, "the gentlemen all come into the coat-room to smoke, and they was there for ever so long, and they was taking off some of the young ladies—oh, they did mimic some of them crool!"

"Oh," I observed, trying to show a fictitious absorption in my book.

"An' they talked about you, miss——"

"Ah——" I remarked faintly.

"They said——" continued Larkin, evidently striving after accuracy as he arranged the tea-cups, "you was a perfick dancer and—you'll excuse me, miss?"

"Yes——?"

"You'll understand, miss, no offence meant, I'm sure, and none taken? But the words *they* used was '*A jolly little thing*!'"

"Oh," I said, finding it impossible to disguise my relief, but adding anxiously, "And did they mimic me?"

"They see ME there," responded Larkin with the air of a *preux chevalier*.

Now I had discovered that my nickname in London was "The Infanta," and I felt that the only person who could unravel the true inwardness of this nomenclature was Larkin. So while on the subject of coat-rooms, I mentioned it, adding tentatively: "Have you ever heard any reference to it at balls? Anything which could indicate what it *means*?"

Larkin puckered up his brows in the fashion which, with him, denoted profound thought. "Sounds to me a mix-up, miss, sort of Dignity and Impeddence," he pronounced oracularly; then suddenly

grasping that this interpretation might not be respectful, he added in haste, "But they don't always call you that——"

"No?"

"You'll remember, miss," puckering his brows yet more, "the other day that young lady, Lady Hart's daughter, she had a loop torn off her dress, and it got round the heel of your shoe in the Lancers, and she danced off and lef' you sittin' on the floor? I see it from the doorway——"

"Yes," I rejoined. The episode had not been dignified, and although my fellow-dancers had swiftly helped me to my feet, my feelings had been wounded. But Larkin had no sense of the ludicrous.

"They said, miss, that was a case '*of Pickering her up*!'"

* * * * *

Larkin, however, had his faults. Occasionally he was afflicted with moods of contrariness, much like the temper of a sulky schoolboy. I used to give little tea-parties in my sitting-room at which, being very youthful, the assembled guests sometimes played a silly game with counters called "Tiddleywinks." It was, admittedly, a long way for Larkin to take up both guests and refreshments, and occasionally, in the midst of an entertainment of this description, he would decide that he had been up and down a sufficient number of times, and decline firmly to hear the bell summoning him to bring up more tea. Judged by a modern standard of service no doubt I was too exacting, but in those days such conduct on the part of a servant was deemed inexcusable, and at length, owing to the uncertainty of his services, it was considered best that Larkin should go, although the parting on both sides was entirely amicable. So Larkin went off to America, and many years afterwards I was electrified to receive the following missive:

MRS. STIRLING, MADAM,—

I hope that you won't think it free of me to write to you, but I often think of the jolly times we used to have, miss, and them balls we went to, and them tiddleywinks teas, and how badly I behaved sometimes when I used to cut up ruff and refuse to answer them bells quick, but it generally ended in me doing as I was expected, and enjoying the fun. And I wonder how all the gentlemen is as was your partners, and the two you seemed partial to. You'll excuse me, miss, but I always thought you was going to marry one of them, and I don't seem to remember the name of the gentleman you as married. Was he at Eton?

You will remember that I used to walk out with that Miss Archer [I had been unaware of the fact]. Her and me have always kep letter-writing, and that's how I heard you was married, and I wanted to tell you I ave done well out here

A. M. Wilhelmina Pickering.

From a shadow photograph by Kate Pragnell.

and made money, but I ave never forgotten them ole times an how happy I was with you and your kind mammar—she was a real kind lady. But mother is gittin old, so I am coming home to look after her, and I'd like to call to see you, miss, if you won't think it to free.

And one day he arrived, looking just as he used to do, smart and dapper, and full of irrepressible talk. His tales of life as a waiter in America were full of incident; and he admitted that there was some good in that country. "But, if you'll believe me, miss, it did seem strange to be in a place where, ask as one would, no gennelman had ever been at Eton!"

II

But the world moved on, even in my day; and by and by I not only drove in hansoms alone, but went in an omnibus, under protest. While on this homely topic I may mention that there was a certain class distinction maintained in the latter vehicles at that time. For long, inside fares had paid *2d.* for a distance which cost the outside passengers a penny, and as a result the tradition lingered that the latter were of a lower social grade, and were expected to wait respectfully till the superior fares had disembarked from the interior. Thus, one day when an upstairs fare ran down the steps and pushed in front of me, the conductor turned to me, scandalized at such democratic presumption. "Them's manners for you!" he exclaimed in chivalrous apology.

It was a landmark in emancipation when I, too, ventured on the top of the plebeian vehicle. I had a very pretty girl staying with me, and one pouring afternoon when we had disconsolately watched the rain descending in sheets, she proposed, as a startling adventure, that we should drive down to the City in this manner. So we dressed ourselves up in waterproof garments, and full of glee at our temerity, clambered on to the top of a clumsy vehicle which I believe had only recently been transformed from side-way to "garden" seats; but we thought Nemesis had fallen when the driver, looking round at us, observed with facetious affability, "Nice weather for little ducks!"

Ere long, with increasing torrential rain, we cravenly took refuge inside the conveyance; and then I noticed the conductor take a raw egg from his pocket, crack it, and proceed to devour it, shell and all. Seeing my interest in the proceeding, he condescended to enlighten me: "Do you suffer from chilblains?" he asked genially. I admitted that such a disaster had occurred to me. "Then I'll give you the finest tip you ever had," he said, with an air of one announcing a discovery of scientific importance: "You jest eat roareggs—shell and all—and you'll never have another chilblain. *It's the shell that does it!*"

Later, seeing a crowd assembled in the street, I asked my new friend if some accident had happened. He cast a languid glance over his shoulder to where some woman lay prone upon the pavement, obviously suffering from the effects of a recent "alcoholiday," and, enlightening my simplicity, summed up cause and effect: "Somebody's berfday," he said laconically.

It will be understood that in days when to drive in or on a 'bus was an adventure, or alone in a hansom was an indiscretion, the idiosyncrasies of cockneydom diverted me like a peep into a new world; but a less engaging trait of the type was soon brought under my notice. One day a girl I knew thrilled me with the tale of a misadventure which had befallen a cousin of hers. The latter had a very beautiful voice, and on leaving a party late one night, the man who saw her into a cab remarked regretfully: "I think it was a great shame you did not sing us that last song!" Soon after she had driven away, she observed something undesirable in the fashion of the driving, but at that late hour and in evening dress she could not get out to hunt for another cab. At length, in crossing Belgrave Square, which was dimly lighted and comparatively deserted, the four-wheeler drew up, the driver descended heavily from the box, and opening the door, seated himself resolutely on the step: "Shing us that lash song!" he demanded.

The modern damsel would have felled the man with Jujitsu and have walked calmly home: the Victorian damsel doubtless awaited the coming of a Knight Errant.

With this alarming tale, however, fresh in my mind, I one night fancied that the driver of a hansom in which I was returning home drove somewhat erratically. I had given him the usual instructions respecting my destination: "First corner house on the left in Bryanston Square," but instead of following these, he deliberately started at the first corner house on the right, No. 1, and drove the entire way round the Square to reach No. 48. When I got out, therefore, I remarked with asperity: "Don't you know your right hand from your left?" "Ye-esh!" came an argumentative, husky voice from the box-seat, "*But I dunno the right handsh of the Square!*"

A subtle distinction, however, seemed to exist in those days between the driver of a growler and of a hansom. The latter was usually of a superior type, a stage nearer to that essentially modern product the taxi-driver; but one day my mother and I were driven by an individual who had an amazing veneer of dignity. When, on getting out, my mother tendered him the legal fare, the man gazed at his outspread palm and remarked with a gentle melancholy: "You have not overpaid me, Madam!" My mother, who had gone up the steps of the house, turned round, and inquired what he had said.

"You have not overpaid me, Madam!" he repeated, equally gently.

"I cannot hear what you say!" complained my mother, coming back to the edge of the steps.

The cabman deposited the money in his pocket with the air of an Emperor closing an interview, and observed with resignation: "Ah, it doesn't matter!" whereupon, concluding all was satisfactory, my mother turned away.

"Ugh!" literally bellowed the man. "You 'umbug—*you could 'ear that*!"

In a diary in which I occasionally jotted down stray incidents in desultory fashion, I find recorded the following landmark in emancipation:

"To-night I had a latch-key for the first time, so that the servants can go to bed. . . . We were a very cheery party at Drury Lane in the Duke of Bedford's box [which is entered by a private entrance] but at the end of the performance Mr. George Russell forgot to ring for the carriages in time, so that there was a general confusion, and suddenly I discovered that every one had melted away without me, and the attendants informed me that all vehicles had gone round to the public entrance. . . . It was midnight before they secured a growler for me and sleepily I set off home. . . . Then suddenly I put my hand into my pocket and found—*no latch key*! Being unused to it, I had left it on my dressing-table; the servants would have gone to bed, and a new electric bell which had been installed recently would, I knew, never be heard by my maid at the top of the house.

"As I disembarked from the cab I sadly confided in the cabby, who luckily proved most fatherly and sympathetic.

"'Never you fret, Missy,' he said. 'I won't leave you. 'Tain't fittin' a young gel like you to be left on the doorstep. I'll see this thing through if we wait till the milk comes round!'

"And see it through he did. He rang the bell till he broke it. He collected small stones and flung them up at the windows till he cracked a pane of glass; he prowled round the house like a caged animal, finally he climbed the area railings and knocked upon the pantry window with the butt-end of his whip, till the shutter was opened a tiny way and the following dialogue took place:—

"Austin (the butler, successor to Larkin): 'Who's there? If you're a burglar, you'd best be off.'

"Cabby: 'Burglar be —— (something incomprehensible) it's your young Missis come home with the milk. Lost 'er key. Can't git in.'

"Austin (horrified): 'Oh dear! I'll be up in a moment. I'm just having a bath and I must dress.'

"Why Austin should be having a bath at midnight I have not unravelled; but my kind Jehu who waited beside me had had his feelings hurt. 'Called me a burglar—and me with a brother

in the Force ! ' he muttered disgustedly ; so to distract his attention I pointed out the moon, a shining ball sailing placidly above the house-tops, while the tall trees in the square were all misty gold in its mysterious light.

" ' Nice little bit o' cheese ! ' he conceded with the air of one who humours a child ; then he glanced up at the house reflectively. ' Big 'ouse, this,' he said ; ' but I live in a bigger ! ' A vision of workmen's buildings crossed my mind, but I did not wish to hurt my friend's feelings again by any tactless insinuations, so I seated myself on the doorstep, enjoying the lovely mysterious night, while still with a rankling of his former grievance he recounted tales of his brother's prowess and exciting captures of burglars, till the door was opened by a sleepy Austin in a curious déshabille, and I pressed largesse into the outstretched hand of my gentle Jehu ere I crawled up to bed."

One more Cockney episode dwells in my recollection. I was coming back from a ball at Woolwich in the open carriage through a very lovely dawn. The fresh air after the stuffy ball-room, the stillness and peace of the streets at that hour, and the transparency of the sunlight resting across the park, filled me with delight ; but as I was driving up Park Lane in dreamy enjoyment, suddenly my reverie was interrupted by the sound of hoarse cheering. Looking round, I saw a large party of sweeps at the corner of Stanhope Street waving their brushes at me and roaring with laughter. I had forgotten that the cloak which I was wearing, though a pale *eau-de-Nil* by artificial light, was a brilliant pea-green by daylight, and that some yellow roses, disarranged by the wind, were wobbling jauntily upon my head—in short, the rakishness of my appearance attracted my new friends, and as I waved back to them, the cheering redoubled.

Beneath the levelling effect of education, the true Cockney type is rapidly undergoing modification, and gradually its especial characteristics may disappear—that concise, curt way of conveying information, that indefinable dry humour, a cross between cynicism and solemnity. The advent of motors in itself wrought a swift transformation, although, for a space, these furnished a fruitful source of sarcasm. One of the first taxis, stationary near a curb and buzzing aggressively, attracted the attention of an old-time cabby. He leant, with assumed interest, towards the dignified chauffeur : " *Enny 'oney ?* " he asked anxiously.

And even to-day, occasionally, the old wit scintillates as of yore. Recently an elderly friend of mine was going by the Underground when the ticket collector carelessly omitted to clip her ticket, and she drew attention to the fact. The man promptly nipped out a piece and returning it to her remarked soothingly : " There—it will be lighter for you to carry now ! "

III

I had not been out long before I discovered the extreme disadvantage of short sight. I shook hands with all the people I didn't know; I cut all the people I did know—by which means if I made a few new friends I made many new enemies. My worst time, however, was when riding. In the morning, what was termed the liver-brigade exercised daily in the Park, but my youngest brother, who rode with me, had a theory that unless we went either at cock-crow in summer or dusk in winter it cut the day up. The latter time was a trial to me, as, to the short-sighted, twilight accentuates the difficulty of distinguishing objects which are still clearly visible to people with normal vision.

One November evening my brother was bestriding a smart black cob whose euphonious name was "Swagger Satan," but who was known for short by the latter half of that patronymic. Being tired from a long ride on the previous day Rowland did not wish to trot, so I proposed to canter on ahead and return to him. I had gone but a little way, however, when I heard him, as I thought, trotting after me; so concluding he had changed his mind, I reined up my mare to wait for the pursuing cob, and then, moving on at a foot's pace beside it, I leant towards it and addressed it affectionately: "Well, old Satan, how are you?"

Scarcely had the words left my lips than I realized that I was addressing a cob of the wrong colour and ridden by a complete stranger! Aghast, I whipped up my steed and cantered on—and the stranger cantered after me. I continued my way hurriedly to the end of the Ride, keenly aware of the hoofs following in my wake, but by then having collected my scattered senses, I determined to make a dash back to rejoin my brother. As ill luck would have it, when I wheeled about, my horse tactlessly began to kick and plunge, and the stranger, riding up to me, lifted his hat.

"Can I do anything for you?" he asked cordially.

"Oh no, thank you!" I responded hurriedly; then, feeling some prompt explanation of my behaviour was advisable, I added nervously: "I mistook you for my brother in the dusk."

"*Your brother?*" he observed superciliously, ere he rode away; and it then occurred to me that I had first called the man "Satan" and next assured him that I had mistaken him for my brother.

On other occasions friends have informed me that I have been seen standing near the Marble Arch waving wrathfully to a cab-man's shelter under the impression that I was hailing a hansom which refused to see me; that I was observed wending my way across the road to post a letter in the scarlet uniform of a soldier; again, that I was dancing gaily in a ball-room carrying a murderous-looking knife which I had picked up from the supper-table in mistake for my lorgnettes. But perhaps the quaintest episode was the following: one day, seeing a carriage, as I thought, drive up to

the front door just as I was wishing to go out, I rushed to the top of the kitchen stairs and called out anxiously: "Say I am not at home!" "*It's a hearse, miss!*" came with a delighted gurgle from the basement. There was a funeral a few doors off and the gruesome vehicle had drawn up in front of our house to await the hour appointed to claim its occupant.

IV

To take a cursory glance at the social vagaries of those days, nowhere perhaps is the divergence between the past and present so noticeable as in a ball-room. It is a favourite matter of comment that the girls of the old brigade danced with a heart-whole enjoyment which seems unknown to their successors. Beaming with delight, they spun, often without a break, through a programme of twenty-five dances—and it must be borne in mind that those dances consisted of rapid polkas, quick *deux-temps*, rowdy kitchen Lancers, breathless galops, occasionally a lively Highland schottische, and the *pas-de-quatre*, which I introduced into London, and which although correctly a slow, graceful dance, was soon transformed into a romp as rapid as the rest. The exercise was at least vigorous, the music inspiriting with, occasionally, an under-current of pleasing sadness. The haunting strains of *The Blue Danube*, *La Gitana*, *Toreador* and many other half-forgotten favourites would compare favourably with the crude, jangling jazz tunes of to-day, while the dancers of to-day, in comparison, appear preternaturally solemn as they walk round the room in a fashion which used then only to be seen—and surreptitiously laughed at—at servants' balls.

In those days, moreover, married women usually refrained from dancing, and the spectacle of a grandmother executing nigger dances to nigger music, was unknown. Another unwritten law decreed that it was "bad form" to reverse in a crowded London drawing-room, and the man who made the attempt was a "rank outsider," while a hostess who discovered such a contretemps taking place at her ball was filled with shame at the knowledge that a black sheep had stolen into her immaculate flock. Entertaining, as a whole, was on a much more elaborate scale. As to the ball-dresses, they were of paler tints than to-day, and had tightly-boned bodices which were expected to fit like a glove. A small waist was, of course, a coveted beauty, and those who could not get it small enough got it as small as they could. "I never know what to do when I am going to a ball," a girl once said to me tragically. "If I put on my ball-dress before dinner I cannot eat my dinner, and if I try to put it on after, I can't get into it."

It was likewise customary to pay 25*s.* for a silk lining to one's dress, as it sounded so much *richer* if it rustled as one walked; and all afternoon dresses had long trains. In winter one held up one's skirts, at a discreetly-planned angle, with cruelly chilled

fingers which dared not for one second relax their hold; but on wet days a prosaic complication arose. For when one desired to blow one's nose, it was necessary to seek the shelter of some doorway in order to close the umbrella which occupied one hand and to drop the train which occupied the other. Then, having performed the necessary rite, one had to re-open the umbrella, readjust the precise altitude of the skirt, and hasten on one's way till such time as the infirmity of nature enforced a tedious repetition of the act.

For several seasons bustles were an essential adjunct of all *chic* feminine attire. These grew larger as time went on, till it became necessary to wear a couple, one on the top of the other. I remember one ball which was completely spoilt for me by the discovery that I had gone to it wearing one bustle instead of two. As I entered the ball-room an officious friend waylaid me and observed in a stage whisper: "You look like a cat without a tail!" "And you," I responded, with fine sarcasm, "like a cat with a tale!"

None the less, so dowdy did I think I looked owing to this misadventure, that I refused to dance, and divided the evening between supper and conversation. On ordinary occasions I classified my partners as dancing-machines and talking-machines—the former were for use in the winter, the latter during the summer. Meanwhile dinner-parties were usually for older people, and there were no *thés-dansants*. Indeed, it seemed recognized that the smarter the dance, the later the hour at which it commenced. Personally, as I knew that hot rooms and loss of sleep always made me ill, I endeavoured to make the game worth the candle and invariably went home by daylight. Then, finding sleep impossible, I had a bath and breakfast, and went for my ride, resting later in the morning.

For several years there was one gloomy-looking musician, without whose presence at the piano no ball was considered perfect. It was rumoured that he had some romantic history attached to him, and was an escaped monk. He played exquisitely, but he always expected a special brand of champagne for his personal delectation, and hostesses were wise who provided this, for he could make or mar the success of a dance. One day, at our house, a presumptuous youth marched up to the piano and begged him to play some particular valse. At first the retired monk took no notice, but played on sullenly; then, as the request was repeated, annoyed at being dictated to, he fixed a gloomy eye on his interlocutor and made what was designed to be a crushing retort: "Young man," he said, disdainfully, "do you know that I keep my own carriage?"

At home we had an excellent floor, and two large ball-rooms were set apart for dancing, while the chaperons were ensconced in the third. Several times we had fancy-dress balls, in connection with which there was the usual heated discussion about possible costumes, and on one occasion I wrote to a cousin who was tall and thin, suggesting that he should appear as a yard-measure. "Cer-

tainly," was the rejoinder, bearing reference to my own stature, "if you will go as a cheap remnant!" Another time the same man appeared as a jester with cap and bells, while I was *poudrée* and wore a dress copied from an old picture of my great-grandmother. "It is not often," he remarked to me when we were supping together in broad daylight at five a.m., "that you see a fool and his great-grandmother having breakfast together!"

Once he took a shy débutante out on to a balcony after dancing, when, finding it chilly in contrast to the hot ballroom, he turned to her anxiously and observed: "I hope you won't catch cold?" Apparently the lady wore Jaeger, for she rejoined with a happy confidence: "Oh no! You see I am covered from head to foot with natural wool!"

Not long since I met him again, and he recalled to my mind a forgotten episode. Once in those youthful days he extended a slim ankle encased in an effective mauve sock and remarked conceitedly to the onlookers, "Don't you think that is enough to make any woman leave her husband?" And from the corner where I sat he heard a small voice respond thoughtfully, "Yes; if *you* were the husband!"

At one fancy-dress ball a girl created no small stir. She came as "The Night of the Bath." She was clad much as I had been at the "Lord Warden," but more scantily, in bath-towels; she was tricked out with all the paraphernalia connected with washing—soap, sponges, nail-brushes, etc.; and her headdress was a small tin bath in which reposed a naked doll.

It was this same girl who confided to me that she had answered an advertisement in the papers which offered, on the payment of one shilling, to send an infallible cure for a red nose. She dispatched the shilling, and the answer came back: "Go on drinking; and your nose will turn blue."

The pathos of this can be better appreciated if one realizes that in those days there prevailed an unwritten law to which every well-conducted female gave observance. No ubiquitous She ever powdered her nose in public. Those of us who were secretly guilty of such an act, performed it in haste, furtively, and with a wary eye on the watch to evade all possible onlookers; and subsequently we removed with caution any too-evident traces of our crime.

Yet again my enterprising friend was tempted by the offer of a "fine steel engraving of Queen Victoria for the sum of one shilling." She sent her shilling, and received in return a penny postage stamp.

In connection with her costume at the dance another incident leaps to recollection in which alarm and laughter mingled. One bitter December evening my mother and I were going to a ball, and she had gone upstairs after dinner to fetch her cloak when, to my horror I heard piercing screams coming from her room. There was no electric light in those days, so I seized a hand-candle and

rushed up four flights of stairs, my heart beating violently, for it seemed that some serious accident must have occurred.

Now my mother till past seventy, with the Spartan proclivities of her generation, insisted on having an ice-cold bath every morning, which was put in readiness overnight. Going into her room in the dark to find the matches, she had tripped over this, and sliding helplessly into a sitting position, by reason of her heavy, voluminous skirts she became securely wedged in the high, sloping tub. And as the light of my candle discovered her, I saw her enthroned thus in full evening dress—diamonds in her hair, her fan clasped like a sceptre in her hand, her long black velvet dress, inflated with the water, outspread regally around her, while she could only sit there, drenched and frozen, shrieking and shrieking for assistance.

One evening I was at a party given by Mrs. Crichton, granddaughter of the famous Lady Holland, who sent red currant jelly to Napoleon at St. Helena. All the chairs being occupied, the man who had taken me down to supper perched himself upon the edge of a table near which I was seated. After a considerable time, he sprang up with an expression of dismay. "Good heavens!" he said, "I thought I felt cold. . . . I have been sitting on a pink ice!" Mrs. Crichton promptly sent for her maid, an elderly person of grave aspect, who appeared with a large bath-towel and endeavoured to remedy the disaster; but the merriment of the onlookers disconcerted her. "I think, sir," she said at length, with severity, "we had better retire to a private apartment."

Mrs. Crichton's parties were greatly appreciated, since they had an element of Bohemianism which then had all the charm of novelty. I remember handsome Lily Hanbury there playing "Animal Grab," as keen as any child, while her magnificent voice, pitched to suit a theatre, defied all the feebler attempts of others present to make themselves heard. And I recall a delightful American reciter, Miss Jennie O'Neal Potter, who used to fill us with alternate tears and laughter by the recitation of poems—trivial in matter, but endowed with a wonderful pathos and fascination through the magic of her rendering. In one she described to us how in her home by the sea the children made use of the great, thick strands of the hanging vine as swings, and used to sway out right over the waves and back; till, from a hot London drawing-room, crowded with people, she had transported us to the wild, rocking ocean and the brine-drenched air; and I can still hear her declaiming the conclusion:

> —And fame seems a worthless thing—
> I'd barter it all for one day's romp
> And swinging in the grape vine swing—
> Swinging in the grape vine swing!
> Laughing where the wild waves ring!
> I would I were away from the world to-day,
> Swinging in the grape-vine swing!

But amongst those with more rigid ideas, professionals were taboo save as entertainers ; and I remember my mother's anxiety when she discovered that my brother had invited Sir—then Mr. —Johnstone Forbes Robertson to luncheon one day. " I should be careful not to mention before the servants that he is an actor," she said, " they might misunderstand it—and on *Sunday*, too ! "

As the world was more prim in those days, scandal was more rampant, and in this connection I remember hearing gossip about the côterie of " Souls." " Do you think the ladies ever slip from their high ideals ? " someone once asked. " There are no Souls without Slips," responded Sir William Harcourt.

Meanwhile, society, though less exclusive than in a previous generation, still made a pretence of eliminating the unfit. One very rich woman who suddenly appeared in London out of the void, took a house in Park Lane and proceeded to storm the strongholds of the *élite*. She proclaimed her plan of campaign with delicious simplicity. " One must draw the line somewhere," she announced with *hauteur*, " and I intend to call on no one who keeps a parlourmaid." In modern times her acquaintance would have been disconcertingly limited.

For several seasons she made strenuous and untiring efforts to get to know my mother, who as resolutely avoided the acquaintance. At length at a picnic I met one of the sons, and finding him innocuous, I consented to his request that he might call. He came the next day ; and the day after the entire family left cards. Each had his or her name printed on a separate pasteboard ; and not knowing of how many members our family consisted, they thought it best to be on the safe side, so the father, mother, two sons and two daughters, left five cards apiece, thirty in all. No notice of this onslaught was taken by us ; but it was repeated each season with exemplary patience.

Another hostess at that date used to give balls two nights running and divide her acquaintance rigidly into what became termed " the Drabs " and " the Smarts." Everybody was anxious to be one of the Drabs, as this was voted the livelier party. " There are only dullies at the Smarts," said a lady, given to feline amenities, " and the hostess herself never knows who any of them are ! "

One essential element of a successful party was that you could escape from it easily and hurry on to the next. Another and apparently contradictory element was that the guests should scarcely have standing room. Mr. Ernest Gilchrist, who was a very popular host of those days, was once giving an " at home " in a small house close to Cadogan Square, at which it was an impossibility for all whom he had invited to get in at the doorway. A crowd of ladies in evening dress, therefore, were trying vainly to make their way across the pavement and up the steps, when an officious policeman came fussily towards the obstruction. " Pass along ! Pass along

there ! " he ordered. " But you don't understand ! " piped one lady indignantly ; " We *can't* pass along—we're at a party ! "

At afternoon teas, the chief entertainers were Corney Grain and George Grossmith ; and the general opinion seemed to be that the latter was best on the stage, the former off it. Corney Grain was indeed hard to beat in his especial rôle. He was a tall man, and when young, I am told, had a remarkably good figure ; but when I knew him this was spread into very ample proportions, and he was always making jokes about his " sylph-like form." At one time when infant prodigies were the rage, he declared he would come on to the platform dressed in a white frock with blue shoulder-knots and have four very strong men to lift him on to the music-stool, so that he could play " God save the Queen " with one finger. He was aways ready to utilize funny incidents at his own expense. One day an old lady whom I knew, going up a crowded staircase at an " at home," remarked that she had already heard Corney Grain three times that week and was heartily sick of him, at which juncture she discovered that the man she was talking about was walking upstairs beside her. During the subsequent entertainment, as she had feared, Corney Grain retailed the episode, mimicking inimitably the intense disgust in her voice. " It is *so* reassuring," he said, " when you arrive at a party, to hear old ladies on the staircase exclaim with fervour : ' Oh dear, there's that dreadful bore Corney Grain again—I *am* so sick of him ' ! " " His only revenge," she said, with simplicity, " was calling me an ' *old* lady ' ! "

Corney Grain, however, made the foibles of Society his principal butt. I can still hear him singing :

> Old Peter Parvenu gave a grand ball
> Of all the fine guests he knew no one at all ;
> So old Peter Parvenu went off to bed,
> And the guests all shook hands with the butler instead.

In modern times, when each girl is expected to bring a dancing partner with her and the hostess often has no personal acquaintance with half the male guests present at her ball, the behaviour of Peter Parvenu would occasion little comment. " Oh, mummy ! " I heard a young girl say to her parent after a dance in her own home, " do you know you shook hands with the waiter, who was announcing, almost every time he came upstairs ! "

Formerly hostesses who were particular never gave away cards for their parties, but if requested to invite anyone, sent the invitation personally. One man about town, who was good-looking and an excellent dancer, rightly or wrongly, got the reputation of going to balls unasked. At a dance, therefore, at which he appeared, the son of the house rashly went up to him and requested him to leave. " I know that my mother has not the pleasure of your acquaintance," he said stiffly. The man took his departure without comment ; but unknown to her family, the lady had been giving away invita-

tion-cards to her friends, and the next morning the ejected guest scored by sending to the officious son at least a dozen invitations which he had received for that particular dance.

The prudishness of the Victorian Age is an accepted myth of to-day, but many of the ditties then in favour would now be taboo. "Two lovely black eyes, Oh, what a surprise," and others of that ilk, were not more characterized by wit than the popular parodies on them were by refinement; and Corney Grain was not slow to satirize this phase of society. "A Song of Mayfair," which first came out in *Punch*, was often sung thus by him:

Ding-a-dong! Ding-a-dong! What do I care!
I'll sing you a nice little song of Mayfair.
Five hundred people invited to meet
In a wee little house, in a wee little street.
Five hundred people all crowded together,
Discussing the sins of their friends and the weather.
One little pianist playing an air
No one to listen, and no one to care!
One little lady attempting to sing,—
Tears in the eyes of the poor little thing!
Up gets a man; sings "*Two lovely black eyes*"
You might hear a pin drop, "*Oh, what a surprise!*"

For *that* is the music they like in Mayfair
Ding-a-dong! Ding-a-dong! What do I care?

The above was called to my remembrance by the late Lord Hotham, who likewise wrote:

"That old Corney Grain song reminds me of one which I once heard at a concert, sung by an amateur Corney Grain, which so amused me that, having in those days a good memory, I remembered all the words (except for a few holes which I darned myself) and then made up a tune for them and used to sing them personally.

"The singer began by saying that 'a most important feature in the modern British Ballad is the Refrain—(you must not call it Chorus—that is vulgar). This Refrain need not have any reference to the theme of the song—nor indeed any sense at all! The one essential was that it should be full of a vague yearning pathos and be sung to valse-time.'"

LE MONDE OU L'ON S'AMUSE

I went to a Party in Mayfair,
In a house most absurdly small,
Where we danced, some sixty-four couple,
On the landing and stairs and hall.
We danced downstairs in the kitchen,
We danced in the scullery—hard.
We sat out between in the larder,
And I got my coat all over lard!

[*Refrain, sung with much pathos.*]
Where are they now? Where are they now?
Are they sitting beside the sea?
Are they fishing for crabs from four-wheel cabs?
Or strolling down Piccadillee?

The chaperones were packed away somewhere,
But really I can't say where.
The mantelpiece held half-a-dozen,
The piano supported a pair.
In the midst of a furious polka
The mantelpiece fell to the ground,
And when the said polka was ended,
Two chaperones could not be found!

[*Refrain, sung with still more poignant pathos.*]
Where are they now? Where are they now?
Are they sitting beside the sea?
Are they fishing for crabs from four-wheel cabs?
Or strolling down Piccadillee?

The candles they rocked in their sockets!
The floor went in heaves and bumps!
In fact in some parts of the Lancers
It was seized with a fit of the jumps!
I felt that the house could not stand it.
I fled, and I'm sure 'twas as well.
For they tried a Schottische as a finish,—
And—*CRASH!!!*—the whole edifice fell!!

[*Refrain, sung with an agony of pathos,—I don't like to call it "Chorus of the Survivors"*]
Where are they *now*? *Where* are they *now*?
Are they sitting beside the sea?
Are they fishing for crabs from four-wheel cabs?
Or strolling down Piccadillee?

Corney Grain, however, was never guilty of any breach of good taste, and his gibes were always good-humoured. Some of his predecessors were far otherwise. My mother told me the following tale of the 'sixties. A certain Mrs. Jones, of Pantglās, was then a prominent figure in society, a handsome, ambitious and wealthy woman, who was greatly admired by the Duke of Wellington. She and her husband having had plate-glass inserted in the windows of their house at 82, Eaton Square, the bon-mot about town was to designate them the Joneses of Plateglass.

Besides their London house and their country house, they had, as was then fashionable, a villa at Roehampton, where Mrs. Jones used to give garden parties which were largely attended; but despite her riches, she had the reputation of being very mean, and was fond of inviting *artistes* as guests in order to get them to entertain her friends gratis. One day, so doing, she "caught a tartar."

She had invited to a garden-party a professional singer of the type of Corney Grain; and by and by she asked him to sing. He refused; but the lady became more and more importunate, and,

at last, boiling with exasperation, he was forced to yield. He, however, first fetched his hat and put it in readiness by the open window, then he sat down to the piano and sang the following impromptu loudly and clearly :

> Jones, Jones, Jones of Pantglās
> Why do they call you old Jones of Plateglass ?
> Because, because, because you're an Ass,
> *That's* why they call you old Jones of Plateglass !

Having thus relieved his feelings, he seized his hat, bolted through the window, and was seen no more.

In different fashion, yet another " worm turned." Dr. West told me that after the discussion and excitement over the first appearance of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, at Eastlake's one night, W. S. Gilbert, who had just finished *The Gondoliers*, announced that the Lord Chamberlain had struck out a number of picturesque oaths as being undesirable. Whereupon Gilbert said that he wrote as follows :

> Dear Sir,—
> The scene of my next opera is laid in Trinity Square, Dublin ; will that be passed ? or do you consider it blasphemous ?

V

Talking of the shocked susceptibilities of playgoers recalls an incident which I witnessed at a Drury Lane melodrama. It was a play entitled *The Sins of Society*, and one scene in it gave an exact replica of the dining-room at the Carlton Restaurant, another a still more realistic representation of the interior of Westminster Abbey with a wedding in progress. Suddenly, during the mock-bridal procession to the altar, a man in the dress-circle rose in protest and in a sonorous voice, exclaimed unctuously, " Sacrilegious ! Impious ! Blasphemous ! "

Everybody was startled, and even the sham bride and bridesmaids in the wedding procession involuntarily paused and looked towards the interrupter. But the next moment the situation was readjusted. A raucous Cockney voice arose from the pit : " Shet up, you blithering ole fool ! " it shouted in disgusted remonstrance, " an' let's git on with the show ! " And get on we did.

Another unexpected interruption which I witnessed was when Sarah Bernhardt was acting in *La Tosca*. I was very young at the time, and had been taken principally from an educational point of view, yet I can recall every incident of the performance, such a profound impression did it make on me, especially the extraordinary ugliness of Sarah and the manner in which one forgot that ugliness the moment she began to act. The realism of her performance was all the more striking in comparison with the crudeness of the staging.

The customary glamour of the footlights was missing, aids to imagination were dispensed with. For instance, in the scene of the reception at Court a band stood conspicuously in an alcove, but although the musicians had music-stands in front of them, they had no instruments and made no pretence of playing; while some of the actors who took minor parts in male costume were undisguisedly feminine with their hair in long pig-tails. In contrast, each action of Sarah was convincing, each pose, each gesture expressed genius, as did the wonderful quality of her speech, the power of passion or pathos which she conveyed in each utterance, the manner in which the faintest whisper of her "golden voice" would be heard to the remotest precincts of the theatre.

Throughout the famous scene where she learns that her lover is being tortured in an adjacent chamber by an iron band compressing his skull, one could have heard a pin drop; but the tension became unendurable when, with dawning suspicion she pointed to the closed door behind which the tragedy was being enacted, and demanded breathlessly: "Qu'est-ce qui se passe là-bas?" followed by the heart-rending cry: "Cette tête—si bonne—si douce!" but when in despair she turned upon her tormentor and fought him like a tiger, it proved too much for the feelings of one of the audience. A man sitting just behind us completely lost his head: "Bravo! bravo! Go for him, my girl!" he roared enthusiastically, oblivious of anything save the realism of the scene on the stage; and only later when the curtain went down was he restored to a consciousness of the enormity of his conduct. With the coming of light every one turned to stare at the disturber of the peace, and he sat looking the picture of self-abasement, until a friend came up to him, whispered consolingly, and took him out.

I was told that in one of the 'seventies Sarah Bernhardt's portrait was shown at the Salon; and although she was extremely skinny, she was depicted lying on a sofa with no great superfluity of clothing, while her pet dog was lying by her side.

Alesandre Dumas *fils*, who was not on good terms with Sarah, looked at the picture thoughtfully, and remarked: "*Tiens. Portrait d'un chien qui garde un os!*" ["The portrait of a dog guarding a bone!"]

But Dumas *fils* could air his sarcasm even at the expense of his own parent. Dumas *père* had very evident negro blood in him, and was very vain, so much so that his son remarked: "*Mon père est bien capable de monter derrière sa propre voiture pour faire croire qu'il a un domestique de couleur!*" ["My father is quite capable of mounting behind his own carriage to give the impression that he keeps a coloured servant!"]

Of the genius of Irving it is unnecessary to speak; but I remember when I witnessed a performance of the Irving Dramatic Club how all the men students imitated the great actor's peculiar

stride and enunciation, while the women strove—how ineffectually! —to copy the charm of Ellen Terry. Irving excelled in two opposing characters—the Devil or a Divine. As Thomas à Becket, as Cardinal Wolsey, as the Vicar of Wakefield, he was unsurpassed; as Mephistopheles he was the subtle personification of Evil—a fiend, mocking, relentless, superhuman. His worst performances were those which gave scope for ranting, such as Macbeth or King Lear. So unintelligible was he during the representation of the former, that I heard one of the audience murmur miserably: "I wish someone would go out and fetch me an English translation of this!" while during the performance of the latter, one's sympathies were violently enlisted on behalf of the daughters who turned the boring, incoherent old king out of doors. Unfortunately I never saw Irving in his great part of *The Bells*; but in another play in which his failure was predicted he gave a fascinating, delicate piece of acting.

In *Ravenswood*, dramatized from Walter Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*, he sustained the part of the hero with an indescribable spirit of romance, of melancholy, of fatality—so that even in the scenes of gaiety and happiness, he conveyed the sense of impending doom. His triumph was all the greater in that the absurdity of such an impersonation was confidently predicted. I was at a party shortly after the production of the play where people were sneering at the idea of an elderly man of unsuitable appearance and pronounced mannerisms attempting such a rôle, when a naïve testimony to its success was given by a pretty girl, the only person present who, so far, had witnessed the performance. "Oh," she exclaimed with a charming blush, "he plays the part of the lover so delightfully that one quite longs to be the girl!"

When I personally saw the performance, only one incident struck me as ridiculous. When Lucy Ashton is supposed to be in danger from the bull, the fact was announced by her family peering out of a window in the hall where they were assembled. Whereupon Irving, as Ravenswood, strode with deliberation to a part of the room where hung a collection of ancient weapons and armoury, and sublimely indifferent to the fact that people do not usually decorate their walls with obsolete guns ready-loaded, fetched down an aged blunderbuss, and inquired ingenuously: "Is it char-r-ged?" After which he stalked leisurely to the window and heroically fired its contents at the imaginary bull!

Thinking of the stage of that day with the many names which were then household words, one recurs with a sense of haunting pathos. Pretty Rose—or as she was known among her friends—Génie Norreys, with her large eyes and copper-coloured hair, had a success which was meteoric both in its brilliance and its brevity. Her performance with Weedon Grossmith in *A Pantomime Rehearsal* was the epitome of grace and gaiety, as her acting in *The*

Dancing Girl ensured the popularity of the piece. Yet, so it was, the illegitimate daughter of an unknown father and a handsome South-African mother who was addicted to drink, her doom was doubtless sealed before birth, and while Fortune smiled on her, the bolt fell.

One day a girl who had befriended her came to invite me to see Tree act in Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People.* "The fact is," she said, "Génie Norreys has taken a violent and unreasoning dislike to Tree and declares he has insulted her. He cannot make out what it is all about, and he is genuinely worried about it, so in an attempt to conciliate her, he has lent me a box and begged me to persuade her to go." We went, and greatly enjoyed Tree's fine rendering of a difficult part; but my friend told me that Miss Norreys had indignantly refused to be present; and in the middle of the play I saw Tree look up at our box, searching for her with obvious disappointment.

Soon, I heard many complaints of the curious quarrelsome temper which Miss Norreys displayed—how she always imagined every one was insulting her, especially the people who had shown her the greatest kindness; finally she threw up her contract in *The Dancing Girl* and decamped to Paris on some imagined slight. By and by she was living alone in the little cottage at the end of Cheyne Row, when one day my friend, who was a strong believer in Spiritualism, came to me in alarm. "I went to see Génie Norreys yesterday, and I was quite frightened—she is possessed by some evil spirit. She says that her hand is seized, and without any volition on her part she writes reams and reams of essays and verse in French, a language of which, personally, she has little knowledge. I read some of them and they are quite beautiful! But she made me feel creepy. Her room is all covered with crosses in chalk, and she says that Tree comes and sits on the wall opposite and gibbers at her. When I told her that Tree would do nothing of the sort, she said that if it was not his real body it was his astral body!"

"She is going mad!" I said.

"Oh, no," my friend persisted. "She is possessed! And another thing frightened me—the whole place is full of empty bottles. I believe she is drinking neat brandy!"

"Oh, *that* is the spirit with which she is possessed," I said, enlightened; and not long afterwards the unhappy girl was found wandering in Kensington Gardens, her hands and dress covered with ink and her mind obviously distraught. Her antecedents, combined with the privations and tragedy of a stormy girlhood before fame had come to her, had claimed their tragic toll, and she had emerged from poverty and obscurity only to disappear into a lifelong darkness, when the doors of a lunatic asylum closed upon her.

When her friend of former days went to see her, she found her

busily occupied. She came into the room with pens sticking in her glorious hair, and she spoke briskly. "I am writing—always writing!" she said; "and now I am doing a wonderful play!" She talked about this rationally and with an enthusiasm as keen as any aspirant in the world of art or literature. Thus fine is the line between genius and insanity. By and by I heard that she sat always holding on her lap a little caged bird, as though in its captivity she found some solace for her own. And thus on this chequered stage of life, the curtain rang down on the tragedy of poor Rose Norreys.

Of Tree I cannot resist quoting two characteristic speeches. In one of the moods of depression from which he suffered in common with all others of an artistic temperament, a lady, who was a keen theosophist, urged him to study the creed from which she personally derived much consolation. "Ah," he rejoined ruefully, "I am much too occupied with Tree-osophy to bother about The-osophy!"

Of one of his youngest daughters, who was then passing through the phase of childhood known as "the ugly age," he used to say: "That child has the body of a peasant and the soul of an angel."

I was once staying in a house where George Hawtrey, the brother of Sir Charles Hawtrey, had taken part in some theatricals given by my hostess. He was talking to me about the mere chance which may determine the failure or the success of a play, and he told me how the fate of one of his own had been decided. "It was all going wrong on the first night," he said; "the audience was cold, and the whole thing seemed to be falling flat, when some line in the dialogue was taken up by the pit as an excellent jest. And when the pit laughed heartily, every one followed suit. From that turning-point the play went well! Every night after, the audience waited for that joke and hailed it delightedly. But the funny part of it was that that particular line had never been intended by *me* for a joke—it was written in the profoundest seriousness!" Long ago another playwright, William Shakespeare, discovered that "a jest's prosperity lies in the ears of him that hears it, never in the tongue of him that makes it."

My personal experience of the theatrical world was brief. Since the days of the sea-blue fairy-tale at Banks, I had written books of a similar type till I published, under a pseudonym, a novel called *A Life Awry*. It was the tale of a girl who, born beautiful, becomes deformed from a fall in the hunting-field, and knows herself to be repulsive in the eyes of the man with whom she eventually falls in love. The book was dramatized by Mr. Roy Horniman, and was given a trial matinée at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. On that occasion I was occupying a box with the dramatist; but, after a few moments of suspense, exclaiming, "This is too awful!" he deserted me, and, left alone, I hid behind

the curtain as far as was practicable, devoutly wishing myself far away. Suddenly the door opened and two powdered footmen in crimson plush entered, bearing a massive salver. On the salver reposed a bouquet, and when I took it I discovered it to be a large cauliflower adorned with a ham frill, and tied up with a wide pink ribbon. After that, the subsequent proceedings were brightened up for me like the unintentional jest in Mr. Hawtrey's play.

I may add that the play *Judy* was very successful, and would have come on in the regular bill, but for a dispute about the contract. The acting of Nina Boucicault as the deformed girl was a truly fine and subtle interpretation of a character warped by suffering but triumphant in self-sacrifice, while in her clever make-up, with her beautiful eyes and her charming face, she rendered the deformity profoundly pathetic rather than repulsive.

Some people expressed their surprise at the success of a play in which the note of tragedy was dominant throughout; but in those pre-war days laughter was not so essential as a tonic, and the vogue of the problem play was then in its zenith, with its attractive mingling of philosophy, cynicism and enigma. I have heard the following definition of it:

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

A man and a woman go wrong and confess it: that is a problem play.

A man and a woman go wrong and hide it: that is a farcical comedy.

Another differentiation which might have been made between contemporary exponents of the drama was that Irving specialized in matters scenic, and Wilde in matters cynic. The plays of the latter, with their brilliant dialogue, overlapped and partook of the era of the problem play. But Wilde satirized society by photographing it with a delicious precision and presenting the photograph for its own inspection, as Bernard Shaw has since reflected it like writing held before a mirror, with its cherished fads and faiths transposed and distorted.

CHAPTER X

Autres Mœurs (*continued*)

I

ONE of the never-failing gibes of those days, both on the stage and off, was the advent of the New Woman, a mythical monstrosity whom all men regarded with nervous terror and all right-minded women were expected to denounce.

Mention of this subject recalls Lady Harberton, who, as one of the advocates of comfortable and hygienic clothes, was supposed to come under this category. A handsome Irish woman, with all the indefinable Irish charm of manner combined with a pleasant voice and a mind refreshingly void of the prejudices and pettiness of her fellows, she was delightful to talk to and pleasing to look upon. In her advocacy of dress-reform the gospel which she preached was simple and sensible. "Let girls dress as they like; but after middle-age why are women not to consider comfort?—I feel twenty years younger since I took to rational dress!"

And, looking back, it is amazing to think of the insults and contumely which this simple, reasonable doctrine evoked, especially when expounded by a woman whose personal charm constituted a potent inducement in its favour. In view of the women's garments of to-day—the land-girls and lady-gardeners, so attractive in their neat breeches and leggings; the girls who ride astride and look so infinitely more graceful than did their predecessors clad in ugly apron-skirts and perched askew on a side-saddle—all the sportsman-like, becoming clothes which women now wear unchallenged by public opinion, it is difficult to realize the indignation and opposition which Lady Harberton encountered. Moreover, the skirt which she advocated was constructed to look as inoffensive in Victorian eyes as might be; the division which was supposed to make it anathema was imperceptible; it was a straight, kilted tailor-made which hung in neat folds and bore no resemblance to breeches, and to-day it would be considered cumbrous and prudish!

Yet so strong was the prejudice against it, that when she bicycled to an inn and asked to be provided with food in the Coffee Room, the request was refused on account of her costume; and when the Cycling Club begged her to take the matter to court as a test case, judgment was actually given against her, and the right of the innkeeper to insult her was upheld by the law of a land which apparently considered unhygienic garments, long trains, boned

bodices, tight waists, and bustles an essential criterion of respectability!

By and by it was said that Lady Harberton, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mrs. Langtry and other prominent ladies were intending to appear in breeches, riding astride, at one of the Meets of the Coaching Club in Hyde Park. But when the day came, to the great disappointment of the public, none of them were to be seen; either the rumour was a *canard* or they had abandoned their intention.

The mania for cycling, which spread like an epidemic, tended to diminish this prejudice, but in itself met with an opposition which would have been more violent if it had not "caught on" as a fashionable pastime. It would be impossible to convey to the present generation the amazement with which the rumour first gained credence that women were actually learning to bicycle in the seclusion of Battersea Park, or the astonishing spectacle which it was deemed by those who went thither to verify it. Entire families were to be seen there bestriding their respective machines, struggling to look devil-may-care, with a self-conscious, agonized expression, while some urchin in attendance usually supported each wobbling instrument of torture till the rider landed with a crash upon the roadway. Previously a bicycle had been principally relegated to the lower classes; now every person who aimed at being in the fashion suddenly went mad over the new diversion.

By and by, growing more proficient, the cyclists boldly transferred themselves to Hyde Park, and a new species of "liver-brigade" was inaugurated. The drive beside the Serpentine was thronged with devotees of the new craze and amused or scandalized onlookers, till, at the magic stroke of 10 a.m., the Cinderellas of the Wheel had to fly, for at that hour the park was closed to cyclists, and mounted police drove any stragglers ignominiously out of the gates. In the streets the mob jeered, and one hopeful aim of every errand-boy was to make a lady-cyclist laugh so that she might topple off her machine. I remember Mrs. Steuart Erskine pedalling gaily through the traffic in bright brown boots, while a chorus of uproarious youths sang gaily: "Oh, dem goulden slippers!"

At country-house parties hostesses blessed the innovation, for each guest brought his or her machine and required no other form of amusement. Paper-chases were instituted with hare and hounds awheel, and I went down to Sulhamstead Park, near Reading, for one of these functions, in which I figured as Hare—in company with a stranger who announced that he had been informed he was to ride with "the fastest lady in London." Meanwhile nothing was talked about save the merits of different makes of bicycles and the cut of cycling skirts. The great object was to contrive a skirt which hung evenly on either side of the back wheel, and had the appearance of being divided without any actual division. Tailors were

incessantly advertising new designs with these merits, and I had a silver-grey "cycling habit" made by a man in South Moulton Street. One day, threading my way awheel through the traffic to his shop, well satisfied with my skill and my garments, I saw an elderly lady and gentleman stop short on the curb to stare after me. "*Hid*-geous!" pronounced the old lady in a penetrating voice.

Another innovation which was mentioned with bated breath was the existence of a ladies' club. It was a novelty over which the men made merry, and to which the women members went with a delightful feeling of daring and emancipation. It was started by Mrs. Massingberd, a charming woman, broad-minded and sincere, with an unfailing sense of humour and a happy gift of eloquence. She realized the lonely lives then led by many women of scanty means and few friends, and devised this club primarily as a means of brightening their lot. She and many of her following, in accordance with their advocacy for the greater freedom of their sex, wore their hair cut short, and garments which, in severity, aped male attire—a plain skirt, white shirt, stiff collar and silk tie. The majority, however, did not thus throw down the gauntlet to criticism; but what the club effectually inaugurated was a then novel camaraderie between women who, irrespective of class, met on intellectual grounds, had debates upon interesting topics, and, in many instances, discovered and developed a gift of oratory hitherto dormant.

Nevertheless, the enemy was alert to pounce upon any matter for ridicule. One evening there was a debate at the club on a crying evil of the day—the non-registration of midwives. A well-meaning M.P. took the chair, who, while sympathizing with the object of the meeting, seized his opportunity to lecture the ladies present upon what he announced "God intended" to be woman's duty. At the conclusion of his address, up sprang the ladies one by one, and, amid much good-humoured laughter on both sides, peppered him in a series of witty speeches till he had to own himself fairly beaten. Finally, however, there uprose an elderly woman, Scotch of tongue and dour of aspect, said to be the wife of a chemist, who—although no pen can convey the fashion of her utterance—thus delivered herself on the topic under discussion, i.e. the rival merits of doctor and midwife:

"I have listened with great interest and no small compassion to the views expressed by the gentleman who has addressed us this evening. The lear-r-ned gentleman seems to be very much in the confidence of the Almighty. He has told us a great deal about what 'God intended.' I should inter-r-r-pret it as what 'Man wanted.' . . . And with regard to the necessary reform which we are here to discuss, I wish to state that I per-r-r-sonally have had six cheeldren without the intervention of any man. . . ."

And the evening papers had a paragraph with the ribald heading :

" The New Woman at last asserts her complete independence."

Unfortunately, Mrs. Massingberd died in the prime of her useful, interesting life ; but the work which she had done lived after her, and she was one of the pioneers of a happier existence with broader views and wider interests for those who suceeded her. While a memorial service was being held over her ashes in Westminster, attended by a large concourse of grateful followers, in the House of Commons hard by the question of the Franchise for women was being discussed and dismissed with laughter. " It is quite impossible ever to give votes to women," said a man merrily to me, " because, you see, they would want to sit in Parliament ! That settles it ! "

Subsequently to Mrs. Massingberd's death other ladies' clubs sprang up like mushrooms ; but it was curious to note how the club which she had founded for a time sank its original characteristics and became so ultra-conventional, that while the newer clubs brazenly admitted the possession of a smoking-room on their premises, that first and most emancipated club referred to such a doubtful apartment as " the Games Room."

II

Another movement, which, as to-day, was looked at askance by some and with enthusiasm by others, was the mania for spiritualistic investigation and table-turning. While it effectually disposed of the heaven of one's childhood in which, clad in an immaculate white night-gown, one was to play on a harp through an eternity of musical monotony, it substituted a future existence even less palatable, to be spent playing tricks with tambourines, tipping up table-legs, or writing banalities through Planchette in a tragic endeavour to communicate with those one had once loved. Nevertheless, under pressure from friends, I joined a developing circle, which met on stated days, and a few curious incidents resulted.

One lovely afternoon I went reluctantly to attend the weekly sitting, for it seemed to me a sorry way of wasting the beautiful weather. I was late in arriving, and was greeted by a chorus of disapproval from my friends as I entered the darkened room and slunk into my place at a ponderous table, extending my hands in the approved fashion, palm-downwards, with fingers outspread. Then an elderly gentleman next to me put a crucifix on the table to keep away any undesirable influence, and after a moment the medium announced : " I see three spirits are present—red, white and yellow ! " " Brandy, whisky and gin ! " murmured a frivolous neighbour in my ear.

Now, I had felt extremely well when I entered the room, but soon I became aware of an extraordinary sensation as though the table were heaving up and down like the waves of the sea. In

the dusk I could see that it was entirely motionless, but the sensation continued till I began to feel seasick. Ere long this became so acute that I found myself in a dilemma, since I did not wish to get into further disgrace by again interrupting the proceedings. At length, hoping it would not be noticed, I transferred my hands stealthily from the table to my lap, and directly contact with the wood ceased I felt perfectly well. I had sat thus for some time, extremely bored, when a despairing voice arose from the opposite side of the room. "I am very sorry," wailed a girl, "but I cannot go on like this! It is just as if the table had turned into the waves of the sea, and I am feeling deadly seasick!" No sooner had she spoken than a chorus of confirmation arose round the table. Most of those present had been trying to battle against the same sensation; and the proceedings were abandoned in general dismay!

One night I was taken to a spiritualist club, the members of which assembled in a little room close to the Marylebone Road, and I was surprised to find what a hold the cult had on these people, mostly of the poorer middle-class, artisans, small tradespeople, and lower-grade professionals. They treated the occasion much as a religious ceremony, preserving an air of profound solemnity and opening the proceedings with prayer and a hymn, ending—needless to say—with a collection.

Over the mantelpiece was an astonishing portrait of a man resembling a monkey with a pigtail. This was pointed out to me as the "control," the spirit of a Chinaman, who usually spoke through the presiding medium, a man to whom I imagined the premises belonged, and who soon went under control—as he was bound to do—and addressed us in pidgin-English. In this lingo he incongruously described himself as being the spirit of an English strolling player who had lived long years ago, and, after a hard life, had eventually died in a ditch. His adventures, extracted from him by cross-examination, were dull; but at last an enlivening incident occurred.

One of the ladies present suggested that if she were allowed to hold some article belonging to any member of the audience, she would tell what she "sensed" respecting the owner. A stranger, visiting the club for the first time, thereupon passed up his cigarette-holder, and the medium, under an Indian control, "Little Sunshine," having clasped it for a moment, suddenly to our surprise, began to cry and moan with anguish, holding her jaw with both hands and ejaculating: "Oh, the pain! the pain! the pain is dreadful!"

"Can you account for this?" asked one of the audience, turning to the owner of the cigarette-holder.

"Well," stammered the unfortunate man, looking extremely foolish as he realized this was scarcely a professional advertisement, "*I am a dentist!*"

Although my husband was then unknown to me, he has subse-

quently told me that, about the same date, he went to see Madame Grecq, who was Florence Maryatt's favourite medium. As he went upstairs at her house in Finborough Road, an American organ was playing, which, a lady whispered to him, was a great assistance to the spirits. All present assembled round a table, and Madame Grecq made passes in the direction of each. She had a string of large amber beads wound round her wrist, and as she made a pass towards my husband, he received a violent electric shock. It seemed to paralyse him from head to foot, so that for a few moments he was completely rigid, yet the pain was as severe as though he were holding on to an electric battery. He imagined that all present had had a similar disagreeable experience; but on inquiring afterwards, he found this was not the case.

Madame Grecq next went under the control of a being whom she termed her "dear Scottish doctor," and then that of a cowboy, "Little Sunlight," a variation of the misnamed Indian control who in those days spent eternity attending séances in darkened rooms. Under both influences she talked wearisome nonsense; but by and by an unexpected comic relief was afforded by Madame Blavatsky. She was dressed in a gorgeous gown of plum-coloured velvet, and while she was in the midst of enunciating some beatific utterances about the spiritual world and the peace of Nirvana, an awkward youth passing her upset a cup of boiling chocolate plump into her lap. The occasion was privileged; but as the steaming brown lake soaked into the gorgeous plum velvet, the abrupt transformation of Madame Blavatsky's face, her language and her sentiments, presented a startling contrast to the peace of Nirvana.

One evening at a similar function I was introduced to Mrs. Besant, and our talk drifted on to the subject of elevating the masses by the cult of the beautiful, whence we fell into a discussion upon art and its influence. The topic, I found, was not one which roused Mrs. Besant's enthusiasm; but Countess Wachtmeister, an ardent theosophist, suddenly butted in. "If you saw the beautiful visions and spiritual landscapes *we* see," she announced to me, "you would never care to go to the Academy again!" Perhaps my inquiries were tinged with an element of argument which displeased her, for after a few moments she closed the conversation with the withering comment: "It is impossible to discuss such matters with you—*you* are not even on the Astral Plane yet!" And it may have been my morbid fancy, but I thought she laid special stress on the first syllable of the Plane to which I had not yet attained.

I once asked Sir William Crookes, who was a friend of my eldest brother, what was the conclusion he had arrived at in regard to his investigations in spiritualism. "I *had* the experiences I have published," he said, "and I cannot account for them on any

rationalistic hypothesis. But they led nowhere. Subsequent investigations either produced no result, or else mere repetition of previous occurrences."

One evening a bachelor girl of my acquaintance, who was living in rooms, gave a little party for table-turning. Nothing of note happened from a spiritualistic point of view, but the proceedings formed an excuse for a merry evening, and we had a picnic supper-party at which the company laughed in a fashion calculated to rout any self-respecting spooks. One of the merriest present was Mrs. Oscar Wilde, at that time the pet of London society, a woman fêted and courted by a large circle of friends.

I can see her now as she stood at the table trying vainly to cope with a cold chicken of respectable age and colossal proportions which she had undertaken to carve, and which baffled all her attempts till finally, with diabolical activity, it slid from beneath her attacking knife on to the floor. "I am weak with laughing!" she said, after this disaster, turning helplessly to me as she sank into a chair. She was dressed in some soft shade of grey with a picturesque large-brimmed hat, from beneath which her laughing face looked out framed in its soft brown hair and lit by big luminous eyes. She looked a mere girl, and she was merrier than us all. Poor thing! it was probably the last time she laughed wholeheartedly.

A few days after, my friend came to me and said: "Constance Wilde told me she had taken such a fancy to you, and she did wish you would come to see her. Will you come on her next 'at home' day?" I went, but my friend and I were almost the only visitors. Mrs. Wilde received us with the gentle courtesy which characterized her, but we noticed that she seemed depressed and distraite, and as we walked away my friend remarked to me: "I cannot make out what has happened—usually the street is thronged with carriages and her rooms so full that one cannot even get near her—to-day there was no one there."

Two days later the scandal which enveloped her in its foul breath was public property, and Constance, a woman stricken and shunned by those who had recently fawned upon her, had vanished for ever from London society. Her end, I was told, was a pitiful tragedy. Not daring even to bear the name under which she had once been fêted and courted, she disappeared abroad with her sons; but the shock of what she had endured had done its fell work, and creeping paralysis ensued. For many weary months she lay waiting for the end which was inevitable but so slow in coming, enduring meanwhile, with a clear brain and relentless memory, an existence worse than death.

Under the advice of a foreign doctor, she underwent a useless operation which hastened the final catastrophe. Even thus, I was told the end came with a celerity so little expected that her brother,

who was abroad with her, had left her for a few days. And when it was known that she was dying, the Italians in the little hotel where she lay, with their superstitious fear of death, refused to go near her; so Constance—the once bright, laughing Constance, tied hand and foot by a cruel disease, abandoned by every one, died all alone. . . . Thus the tale reached me through a great friend of the dead woman to whose brother she had once been engaged, and well might her husband write:

For each man kills the thing he loves . . .

But a horrible fatality seemed to pursue every member of that luckless family. Sir William Wilde, a clever oculist, but a man of lax morality, became involved in a scandal with a lady patient which ruined his practice. Lady Wilde, an eccentric woman, but an authority on Irish folk-lore and kindred subjects, died in great poverty in Oakley Street. Both the sons died in the prime of life.

And against this relentless hunting of catastrophe, they opposed their brilliance, their genius, and, in the case of Oscar, a bland effrontery which, guileless as it was of spite, took the onlookers by storm. "The world wants amazing!" he pronounced after inspecting that complacent Victorian community; and to-day, when we are weary of being amazed, it is difficult to grasp the daring, the success of such a venture at such a date. During his first bid for literary fame, he went to a clergyman I know, Mr. Mould, and begged the latter to preach vehemently against his forthcoming book. "But why?" was the natural inquiry; "I have not even read it!" "Because it would be such an excellent advertisement for me!" was the candid rejoinder.

My husband's account of the final phase of the tragedy may be appended, although it belongs to a date before I married. "Of the two brothers," he says, "Willie was far the more witty, only he was not a professional wit and *poseur* like Oscar, and was totally unlike him in appearance. He was a singularly brilliant man, took high honours at Trinity College, Dublin, and wrote wonderful articles in the *Daily Telegraph* at the time of the Parnell Commission.

"After Oscar came out of prison, I met Willie Wilde and inquired, 'What is Oscar doing now?' Willie's reply was a terrible indictment by one brother of another.

"One day I received a letter from Willie, who was then living in Cheltenham Terrace, Chelsea, saying: 'Do come and have chaos with me here among the umbrageous boskiness!' Chaos was his name for Irish stew. I went, and never had Willie been more witty or in higher spirits. He was the most wonderful *raconteur* in London, and he kept the table in a continual uproar. On leaving, I discovered it was raining, so I borrowed his umbrella, and three days later I went to take it back. To my surprise, Oscar, returned from Paris, opened the door. 'How is Willie?' I asked. 'Willie

is dead!' replied Oscar. 'If you want to come to the funeral, will you follow in a hansom?' And he added: 'I am going back to Paris immediately after it.' This was the last time Oscar was ever in England."

* * * * *

But some there are who think that the silence which death interposed on that strange, cynical genius has recently been broken; and we have been treated to the curious spectacle in the Press of living authors gravely analysing the supposed utterances of the dead undeterred by the reflection that, if the individuality does indeed survive the dissolution of the body, critics in the flesh are scarcely in a position to review the literary style of a disembodied spirit. Yet many of the sentences did smack oddly of the dead author, and left one with the consolation that if the ego survives the great transformation scene, the sense of humour which has carried us over so many rough places on earth will still be our stay.

III

Meanwhile, in glancing back at the conditions of that final Victorian period, I have so far neglected all mention of one who was at once the representative and the mouthpiece of her generation, and who in those days seemed such an integral part of the Empire that it was impossible to imagine the existence of England without her.

To-day it is the fashion to decry Queen Victoria, to speak of her as a species of worthy *Hausfrau*, an exponent of all the domestic virtues, but devoid of humour, of uninteresting mentality, and of morbid propensities. Admittedly to-day her ideals and her outlook are extinct as the ichthyosaurus; but modern writers who sharpen their wit on the subject of her limitations find cynicism cheaper than perspicacity. For to criticize her apart from the atmosphere she inhaled, or the standards she epitomized, is to present a picture devoid of perspective. Perhaps, also, it takes a small soul to mock, and a great soul to reverence.

Admittedly, too, in later years, the Queen had a *penchant* for funerals and funereal anniversaries; but in her happier days, I was told, so keen was her sense of humour that it occasioned annoyance to her more prim consort, who was continually checking her—it was not *convenable* to have too merry a figure-head to a great, solemn Empire. The Queen was, moreover, a woman of considerable talent, a fine musician and a hard and conscientious worker—not a dispatch ever passed through her hands without her having devoted to every line the closest attention and scrutiny; further, she was in much a clever tactician. This was exemplified even as a girl of eighteen when, with less knowledge of life than the meanest of her subjects, she had the force of character to rid herself promptly from the shackles of parental authority and to choose as her mentor

an elderly man whose brains she proceeded to pick with assiduity till she arrived at much requisite information inaccessible to her at first-hand. And throughout her life the Queen had another asset which her generation valued—her unfailing gift of tact and sympathy. It was not that she said just the right thing in the right way, but that where sorrow came, her heart went out with a simple sincerity and a profound tenderness to a grief which she shared.

Prince Albert died before my time, but I heard much of his virtues and his unpopularity. He had certain irritating mannerisms which Englishmen resented. For one, when out shooting, no matter how excellent the sport, at a fixed time he would pull out his watch and insist on returning home punctually to a hot luncheon. After dinner, no matter how interesting the conversation, nightly he repeated a formula which grated on the ears of his *entourage*: "Gentlemen, let us join the ladies."

Only after his death was his worth appreciated; but the reverse seems to have happened in the case of Queen Victoria, her eccentricities are remembered, her greatness—for a space—is forgotten.

Though physically strong, the Queen had one disability so pronounced that it shaped the current of her life. She was unable to stand heat of any sort; a stuffy room or a closed carriage at once afflicted her with nausea; and the State coach in which she was forced to drive if she opened Parliament made her deadly sick. This was a reason, unknown to her subjects at large, which militated against her taking part in public functions till this habit of retirement became second nature. She could, on the contrary, enjoy intense cold; she had been known to have meals out of doors when the snow was actually on the ground, and she would go long drives on a bitter winter's evening. On her return, I have heard that Lady Waterpark would be so crippled with rheumatism that she could scarcely suppress a scream when she attempted to move; but Victoria remained impervious to the icy atmosphere, and never suspected the sufferings of her ladies, who shiveringly huddled on shawls in a temperature which to her seemed oppressive.

In like manner she could remain standing for hours and felt no fatigue, so that she failed to realize that others felt it. One day an unfortunate maid of honour collapsed in a faint, and the Queen was much mystified. "But what made her faint? Is she ill? What can be the matter with her?" she kept asking, and no one dared to tell Her Majesty that the girl had committed the enormity of fainting from sheer exhaustion at having stood too long.

The Queen showed great condescension towards all of a rank far removed from her own, such as the cottagers upon the Balmoral estate, old servants or farmers; but where the line of demarcation was less pronounced between her and her subjects, she was rigid in

her determination that it should never be encroached upon, and she never forgave any breach of etiquette. I have related in a previous publication how, when Charles Dickens visited her, she kept him standing throughout the interview, and never offered to shake hands with him ; but when Thomas Carlyle visited her, the dour old Scotsman characteristically took a chair unasked, explaining that he was a very old man, so must sit down ; and the Queen, irate at this conduct, as well as at the freedom with which he proffered advice unsolicited, subsequently declared that she wished to see no more literary men !

There was one Scotsman, however, who was always sure of his ground. I remember a daughter of the Duke of Montrose telling me how, one day, when the Queen was about to walk to her carriage, the Duke stepped forward respectfully intending to offer his arm to escort her down the steps ; but before he could do so, John Brown shoved him unceremoniously aside. " I'll hand her doun, the noo ! " announced John Brown.

At all times Victoria could rebuke any failing with a dignity which crushed the offender more completely than an active display of anger. One day a maid of honour who had been told to see that a shawl was placed in the carriage forgot to give the requisite order, and arrived speechless with haste bringing the missing article personally after the royal drive had been delayed a moment to wait for it. Victoria cut short her apologies. " The Queen of England," she observed severely, " waits for no one."

Another time a maid of honour talking to a friend happened to remark about a man who had been the subject of discussion, " I hear they are going to give him a peerage ! " The Queen's quick ears overheard the observation, and she turned promptly upon the tactless speaker. " And pray," she demanded, " who are '*they*' who are going to give a peerage to one of my subjects ? "

One of the German princes who became related to her used to annoy her by his linguistic errors. Struck by the freshness of British complexions, he one day observed to the Comptroller of the Household : " I do admire your English ladies. They have so very beautiful hides ! " Then observing a thundercloud on the brow of the Queen, he added, without intentional facetiousness : " Ah, I do get what you call the Victoria cross."

Once Lady Waterpark had to cope with a situation more painful than that created by the sympathetic parrot of Ecton. In the Highlands one day, when the Queen was visiting some gillie on the estate, a parrot in a cage yelled out briskly : " Hurry up ! Hurry up ! Sal's coming ! " " What did the bird say ? " inquired Queen Victoria. But none of her suite felt equal to explaining, so all professed not to have heard the remark. . . . " But you *must* have heard—I insist upon knowing ! " protested the Queen, who had seen them exchanging glances. " I think the bird said some-

thing about being in a hurry!" at length ventured one of the ladies evasively; but instantly the tactless parrot, cocking its head on one side and eyeing the Queen with a wicked glance, yelled again joyously: "Hurry up! Sal's coming! Sal's coming!" "Apparently the bird can speak the truth if my subjects cannot!" said the Queen dryly.

There was a finality, a decisiveness about Victoria which brooked no palaver. During one of the many revolutions in Bolivia, the English Minister was insulted and ill-treated. When news of this outrage reached the Queen, she was highly indignant. She sent for an atlas, and silently studied the position of the offending country, then she folded the map up and returned it to the Minister in attendance. "Bolivia," she announced conclusively, "is erased from the map."

Once when it was proposed to erect a public building of hideous design, someone in despair at the project secretly took the plans to show them in confidence to the Queen, hoping to enlist her tactful interference to avert the disaster. But Victoria was distressingly drastic. Having looked at the design, she promptly tore it into fragments, and tossed it into the fire. "*Impossible!*" she pronounced. For her that ended the matter; but her surreptitious informant was left to explain as best he might what had become of the elaborately prepared plans which had been entrusted to his care.

When the Queen brought out *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*, someone remarked at a dinner-party that it was a pity such a record of trivialities should have been published. Disraeli, who was present, turned to my grandmother and said: "I entirely disagree! But it is difficult for the average reader to view life from the standpoint of the writer, and to understand that these same trivialities—a visit to some poor cottager, tea in a farm-house with farm-house fare, or some simple expedition which enables the Queen to view existence from a novel standpoint—are the real adventures of her existence—the incidents outside her ordinary experience, and therefore, *to her*, pre-eminently worth recording! Her subjects," he added with a smile, "would have preferred to read about life in a palace and conversations with Ministers, but to the Queen these are the commonplaces of every day. A traveller in a strange country describes customs which would be 'trivialities' to the inhabitants who live there!"

I once asked my mother what Victoria was like as a girl. "Like no one else!" was her reply. "I remember Lord Stanhope saying to me,' She is far too pretty to be a princess!' But one did not seem able to judge her by ordinary standards, she was so unlike other people. It was a great annoyance to her that she was not taller, but she never struck one as insignificant, because she was very slight, graceful and dignified. She was very neat and dainty,

with most beautiful hands and arms, a tiny mouth, and a very lovely complexion."

À propos of this I may mention an incident of modern times. Not long ago a tea was given by one of the Body-Guard at St. James's Palace, and the attention of several people was attracted by a pretty picture at the foot of the stairs of a young girl on horseback in an old-fashioned riding-habit and hat. "I wonder why Princess Mary was painted in such an old-fashioned habit," several people remarked. But it was not Princess Mary, it was her great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, in days when she had the same lovely colouring!

Victoria, however, as we of the Old Brigade recall her, was a homely-looking, elderly lady, somewhat rubicund and rotund, who wore unprepossessing clothes and was jocosely known to the mob as "Mrs. Brown." We saw her seldom, yet when we saw her the tears came into our eyes. She represented so much, that little, very great lady—the summit of a lofty empire, the centre of the vast, throbbing heart of a mighty people. Nor was it merely foolish sentiment which thus vested her with a romance wholly distinct from physical attraction. In her day England was great and revered; she held the links of empire firmly in capable hands, and those links were knit in the hearts of her people. To the last Victoria remained a personality, not a cypher; she could retain love, exact obedience, and quell impertinence in a fashion all her own; and from the scum of the streets, from the Socialistic section who feigned to gibe at her, and from every crowned head in Europe, she commanded a respect akin to veneration

She died sadly in a dark hour for England, killed by the anxiety of the Boer war; but when she was being borne to her last resting-place, I was struck, as I had never been before, by the powerful hold which she had retained on the imagination of her people. All along the route, the side streets, where not one item of the procession was visible, were as densely packed as the main thoroughfares by a vast crowd—not of sightseers, but of genuine mourners. They awaited the passing of the great queen for the most part in respectful silence, or talked together in hushed voices as though they were taking part in a religious ceremony. Once when a girl laughed, she was immediately called to order by those nearest to her. The very poorest among them had made a show of wearing black. Feathers were discarded from hats, gay ribbons tucked out of sight, crêpe bands tied round tattered sleeves, till, in that seething black throng, which stretched as far as the eye could reach, one read the sorrow of a nation for what seemed akin to the passing of England itself—so completely in the minds of that generation was Victoria identified with the Empire she had so long represented.

I heard that one poor old couple, who were too feeble to venture into the streets, sat solemnly in an area dressed in their Sunday best while the funeral went by, and when remonstrated with on

the folly of sitting where they could see nothing, they replied: "But we could hear it pass—and this was the only token of respect we could show." Nor did it seem to be ridiculous when people whispered how, on the actual night of Victoria's death, one of the largest of the mysterious stones at Stonehenge had fallen; or when a grave African Chief stated that, coinciding with the same great event, a new constellation had appeared in the heavens.

Yet a favourite riddle in the latter days of Victoria, was "Why is the Queen like a wet day?" *Ans.*—"Because she goes on reigning (raining) and never gives the son (sun) a chance."

During the lifetime of his mother, the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII, in marked contrast to the career of his grandson, remained always in the background—an unknown quantity save among his special clique. None suspected the tact and diplomacy for which he was afterwards remarkable, nor the force of his personal magnetism which later became such a valuable asset in international politics. All that the public knew about him was that he had the useful royal faculty of never forgetting a face he had once seen; and that he had, strongly developed, his mother's dignity of manner. However much he unbent in congenial society, he could yet keep his boon companions at a distance and administer a rebuke very quietly, but with crushing effect, when occasion arose; at times he had a distinct touch of Victoria's asperity. Someone in his presence one day spoke of "Henry VIII." "Do you mean *King* Henry VIII?" inquired the Prince. And the tale, whether true or not, was a favourite which related how one of the reigning beauties selling refreshments at a bazaar had requested the Prince to purchase a cup of tea. "What is the price?" asked H.R.H. The lady raised the cup to her lips and took a sip. "Half a sovereign *now*!" she said coquettishly. "There is a sovereign," replied the Prince, "and give me a clean cup."

One characteristic of the Prince was never called in question—his undeviating sincerity. At the time of a celebrated trial in which H.R.H.'s name was involved, I have heard that my father asked one of the leading counsel if he believed that the Prince was implicated. "He has told me not, and that is quite sufficient for me," was the reply. "I am no courtier, yet I would take his word against that of any man in England. It is impossible for him to tell a lie."

To-day, looking back, it is difficult to gauge the extent of the Prince's influence in early life on the Zeitgeist of the Victorian era. With the swing of the pendulum, from the loose morality and licence of the previous generations, it was a period in which outward conformity to the correctitudes was glorified *ad nauseam*. The Prince, with proclivities acknowledged to be far from puritanical, yet represented in much a wholesome reaction from what was artificial and hypocritical in the prevailing code. He seemed

to impersonate the spirit of young life—the eternal *joie de vivre.* Many were the stories repeated with zest regarding him. "I dislike this new fashion which ladies are adopting," he is reported to have said to a witty woman, "of wearing watches on the wrists." "You, sir," she retorted, "are more interested in the clocks on stockings." "Where do you live?" he inquired casually from an American lady who was presented to him. "Nowhere in par-ti-coular!" was the drawled rejoinder—"so you carn't upset moy happy home!" But under his veneer of frivolity was a serious vein which found expression in deep religious feeling, and through it all there was but one true love of his life.

There was point as well as wit in the reply of Lord Marcus Beresford on one occasion. Staying at Windsor, he had gone into a small room apart to play Bridge, when there entered to him King Edward.

"Hullo, Beresford," said the King, "playing Bridge? I did not know you knew one card from another!"

"I know a king when I see him," responded Lord Marcus.

When I went to the first Court after the King's accession, the scene seemed transformed as though a magic wand had passed over it, and the girl who was with me put my thoughts into words when, looking towards the occupants of the two thrones, she exclaimed: "They look just like the king and queen of a fairy-story!" The arrangements for the ceremonial, however, had previously been the subject of much careful consideration and constant revision, so that the officials, accustomed to the dull uniformity of Queen Victoria's ways, waxed impatient. "I don't think they know what they *do* want!" said a cousin of mine who was in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, flustered at contradictory orders; and when the telephone rang again, he rushed to it in a temper and demanded furiously: "Who the something are you, making that h—— of a row?" "King Edward," came the reply.

The reign of the new king, brilliant but brief, was ushered in and closed under tragic conditions. The postponement of his coronation, accompanied by the ominous prophecy whispered abroad that he was destined never to be crowned, was followed in all too short a space by a termination of his sovereignty which left the nation stunned with a sense of irreparable loss. It was impossible to believe in the swift extinction of a personality so vivid, so full of magnetism; and the tale of his last day on earth, as it came to me privately, was strangely pathetic.

Queen Alexandra was abroad, and when his illness took a serious turn, she was sent for in haste. The dying king ordered a map to be brought to him, and traced her route through every mile of her journey with feverish impatience. He announced that he would meet her at the station, adding earnestly: "Ever since she arrived in England as Princess Alexandra, I have never once failed to meet her when I have been in England myself." But

as the day wore on, this became obviously impossible. Meanwhile news was brought that his horse had won at Kempton Park, and he expressed pleasure, but speedily his thoughts returned to the great object of his anxiety. If he could not meet the Queen at the station, he would meet her at the entrance of Buckingham Palace. . . . By and by that, too, had to be abandoned. Still he expressed his determination to be dressed to receive her at the door of his room, and he chose the suit, the shirt, the tie, every detail of the fashion in which he would be clad to greet her. . . . But when she finally arrived he was on the *chaise longue* from which he never again rose. She reached him just before the end.

I went privately to the lying-in-state in Westminster Hall, and, moved by an irresistible impulse, I went again the next day with the crowd. At seven o'clock in the morning I joined the long queue on the Embankment, which moved forward inch by inch. At the last, as I came down the steps of the great hall, our progress was stayed while the guard was being changed, and we waited on the wide stairway while the spent watchers passed out with muffled tread and the fresh relay, with reversed weapons and bowed heads, paced in. To me the scene was unforgettable. Long shafts of morning sunlight in shimmering rays pierced the dusk of the ancient building and dappled with vivid tints all the space below where rested the great purple bier. . . . In the hushed silence a vista passed before one of the events in the past which those ancient walls had witnessed—a panorama which represented the story of England itself. . . . And now *this*. . . . Then, in unbroken stillness, the great multitude moved on once more ; past the spot where the tall tapers glinted in the jewelled dusk, past the bier where, beneath the emblems of State, that king of a mighty nation lay enthroned in death . . . and so once more out of that Silence, unto the sunshine of a strange, new day.

There had been a glamour about King Edward, and it vested him even in death. Through the perspective of history, the merits of his successor will loom greater as a brave man and a rare tactician during one of the most strenuous reigns on record. Yet still to popular imagination Edward's magnetism seems to survive in his grandson. Whatever the future of our " King David " may be, nothing can erase the memory of his brilliant youth, his dare-devil grit, his refreshing versatility, his marvellous brain. Endless are the stories which have endeared him to the imagination of the people, and if some are *ben trovato*, all have the merit of being true to type. One which makes at least a very human appeal was told of his tour in India. Worn out with the enthusiasm of his Oriental subjects and their reiteration of the National Anthem and " God bless the Prince of Wales," he staggered one day exhausted into the mess-room at Delhi. " Ten ' God saves ' and eight ' God blesses,' " he ejaculated ; " for God's sake give me a drink ! "

IV

In conclusion, as the years pass, and the Old eternally drifts into the New, and the New, in its turn, wanes into the Old, the foibles of each generation continue to furnish to its successor food for merriment and regret. And as with the community so with the individual. Not long since when I met again the man who had once boasted that his mauve socks might prove a danger to fragile hearts, he remembered my gibe on that occasion, and took a belated revenge.

"This meeting," he said thoughtfully, "reminds me of the advertisement for Mazawattee tea."

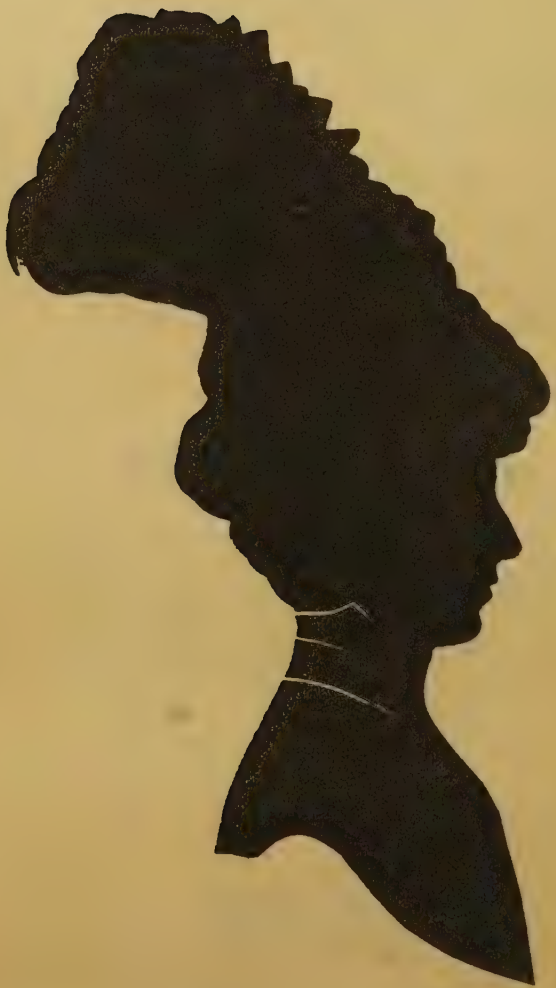
"Why so?" I asked, wonderingly.

"Seeing you 'recalls the delicious teas(e) of thirty years ago!'"

Sketch by the third Earl of Egremont.

PART II

SECOND CHILDHOOD



A. M. W. Pickering (afterwards Stirling).

CHAPTER XI

A Soliloquy

IT is asserted that no sooner is Childhood ended than Second Childhood sets in—development completed, disintegration commences. Yet most of us cling to the fallacy that, for a longer or a shorter period, we pause on the summit to which we have laboriously attained ; that we there breathe a more rarefied atmosphere, look around with extended vision, and distinguish with greater clarity the blue hills of the Beyond, ere we actually begin to " trotter down again " into the valley at the foot—that silent Valley of the Shadow where lies the consummation or the negation of all human hopes and fears.

Of my early life I have spoken in detail because it was a time when detail counted. I have relegated the second part of these stray recollections to my Second Childhood because it seems to belong to a period when what has aptly been termed " anecdotage " has set in. In later years the impressions become blurred into a subdued, confused whole, with only here and there outstanding events which stir pain or laughter.

For the rest, it is increasingly impossible to give any adequate outline of an entire life under the conditions of modern publication. The hundred-thousand words beloved of the modern publisher and designated by William De Morgan as " the true writer's cramp," allow only for an Impressionist picture, for a book possibly replete with what he called " cleverality " ; but the portraiture like a mosaic in which the events of existence were pieced into a graphic, exact whole has become a thing of the past. If a Fanny Burney or a Boswell ventured to take their productions to a publisher to-day, the rejection of these would be a foregone conclusion ; while still there remain those of us who feel that the world would be poorer if some of those tranquil, minute records of the past had never crystallized into being. For it is just the presentation of detail which made of them a very human document—a picture of life as it was truly lived, of life which is, after all, but a succession of trivialities. And so it is that that bygone portraiture has survived the flight of time and the change of outlook, till it has become part of history itself ; while the books of to-day scintillate and pass with the brilliance and the brevity of a rocket.

Yet still the tendency in this age of hurry is for both writer and reader to become increasingly superficial ; and essentially is this so

with any attempt at autobiography. Each author of set purpose starts on a career of deception. He pretends to take the public into his confidence; he prattles prettily about the failings of his fellows; he relates yarns respecting them, joyous or cruel, often apocryphal; he presents life as a series of exciting adventures or well-chosen anecdotes; and meanwhile his cleverness lies more in what he leaves out than in what he puts in. Rarely is any picture given of the man beneath the story-teller, or of what I termed in my first novel "that hidden life of the nerves and senses, in which the bliss or agony of a lifetime may be concentrated into the moment when we are outwardly smiling, impassive." Moreover, how supremely bored the public would be were it otherwise! "When will young writers learn," quoth one of my first reviewers, in a lesson I have never forgotten, "that one half the world does not care one jot what the other half thinks?"

And so, out of those shifting, kaleidoscopic memories of later years, I refer but briefly to a few of the people I have met, the houses I have visited, the strange tales I have listened to, and, above all, to that nightmare from which, as yet, thought turns aside—the period of war-time and its experiences.

A "flumbudge," by William De Morgan.

(*See page 212.*)

CHAPTER XII

Tales of the Pre-Raphaelites and Others

I

FOREMOST among tales to which I paid but scanty attention at the time of telling, but which now come back to me with a novel value, are stories of the Pre-Raphaelites and their following.

That great movement of art, at once progressive and reactionary, which was considered to have lured both my uncle, Roddam Spencer-Stanhope, and my sister, into the bypaths of Bohemianism, was in those days regarded by the Philistine world with a tolerance mingled with irritation—a subject for amusement and regret. I was brought up to consider that both these members of my family had strayed lamentably from the broad highway of the socially select; and I do not recall throughout my girlhood hearing one expression of approbation either in regard to the work itself or to the spirit which animated the workers. Yet so it is in each generation; the ephemeral members of the community preen themselves in the light of their little day, and, proud of their own limitations, despise the Immortals in their midst.

When my uncle exhibited his fine picture, "The Waters of Lethe," at the "Grosvenor," the onlookers were heard discussing it in typical fashion. "What's this—Lithia Waters?" said one flippantly. "Ramsgate in August!" suggested another. At the same date *Punch* facetiously referred to Burne-Jones as "the B(o)urne *to* which no traveller returns!" Any deviation from conventionality was then accepted as a phase of lunacy as readily as to-day any phase of lunacy is accepted as inspiration provided it deviates from conventionality; and while genius was then defined as "an infinite capacity for taking pains," to-day it might be described as "an infinite capacity for evading pains!" (or, by the cynical, "for giving pains"). Even so, two aspects of Impressionism recur to me.

I have heard that Whistler one day, calling on friends, found his hostess looking despairingly at a large glass in her drawing-room which had been smashed. "Stay one moment!" he exclaimed, as a vision of loveliness floated across his mind; and he drew the impression of a spider's web with the centre of the smash for the spider and the lines of shattered glass transformed into the fine filaments of the silver web.

Recently a man known to me likewise painted an Impressionist

picture. He smeared various bright paints on a palette, spread a canvas over this, and sat on the reverse side—*restlessly*. The result was stretched, framed and named ; then sent to an exhibition, where it sold well and the critics went wild over it. They expatiated on its bold technique, its subtle force ; they hailed it—more justly than they knew—as a rare work of unique inspiration. By and by the artist conscientiously tried to explain that it was merely a joke, but it was his explanation which was accepted as the jest.

Recently, too, one of the royal family gazed with some pardonable amazement at the much-discussed portrait of H.M. King George, painted by C. Sims, R.A. At last she breathed the one comment which seemed applicable : " God *save* the King ! " she said.

In the midst of the jarring schools and the phases of fashion my sister seems to stand apart in my recollection, intent, infinitely sincere, seen in the white light of a fine enthusiasm. For her neither phase nor fashion had existence ; she drank in beauty as a draught divine and laid her heart " in a nest of roses, out of the world's way, hidden apart." Among the graphic descriptions of her girlhood which have lately drifted into my possession is one from Lady Stanley, then handsome " Dolly Tennant," who was working at the Slade Schools when Evelyn, a girl of seventeen, went there.

" Long ago in the ' laughing days,' " Lady Stanley writes, " we met at the Slade Schools. We liked each other from the very beginning. I was much of a tomboy then and Miss Pickering was quiet and a very serious worker. I can recall her with extraordinary vividness. She was always very absorbed in her work, and quite indifferent to herself, to dress, and to the gossip of the studio ; but when she awoke from her work, she was very joyous, and laughed heartily. I remember telling her that I thought her dress frightful—it was a red and black striped sort of plaid, much too red, and I told her that as she was pale it made her look the complementary colour—blue. She laughed gaily, looking down at her dress as though she thought about it for the first time.—' Well, it never struck me before. You know I love colour.'

" I always tried to get my easel near hers, because when she rested from work she was so cheerful and calm, and we talked away about Art and Nature and Painters, etc. She drew remarkably well ; but I thought she made her composition, and even her figures, fit, as it were, into a preconceived mould. We had tremendous fights over the Pre-Raphaelites. ' But we've got to get past them ! ' I used to say, looking enviously at her drawing. ' They satisfy me,' said Evelyn.

" One day she asked me to come the following day and spend the afternoon with her. I went to a vast, apparently shut-up house in Bryanston Square. There I saw some remarkably fine paintings by her, and heaps of studies. She had fine enthusiasm,

and I knew she would make her mark . . . she had splendid concentration, and fire enough and genius enough to soar very high.

"Then we Slade School students scattered. I married before Evelyn, and as it happened, I never met her again; but she was not forgettable. I can always recall her with affectionate admiration; and I am somehow glad that I never saw her other than young and enthusiastic, centred on her art, untouched by time and sorrow."

And with the picture of that young girl—intent, serious, caring nothing for the small things of life so only that she might strive towards the goal of her dreams—again the music of Swinburne seems to sing through the silence which has since fallen:

> In the world of dreams I have chosen my part
> To sleep for a season and hear no word
> Of true Love's truth, or of light Love's art—
> Only the song of a secret bird.

II

Yet when Burne-Jones, my uncle and my sister got together the fun waxed fast and furious. I have often wondered if the merry band of so-called Pre-Raphaelites and their followers will be pictured by posterity as beings, not only of serious aims in art, but of abnormal solemnity in daily life—visionaries who hugged sadness as a form of poesy, and whose ideals are best reflected in the wan, attenuated figures which came to be associated with what was ironically termed "the Greenery Yallery Community." Anything more opposed to the personality of most of those involved would be difficult to imagine. On my uncle's sense of humour I have touched. Millais could keep the table in an uproar. Who that has ever heard Burne-Jones laugh could forget it—that bubbling, spontaneous, heart-whole merriment in which it was impossible not to join? I recall a friend telling me how, one evening at the theatre, each time some funny incident occurred, she was struck by a peculiarly joyous gurgle of mirth which came from the darkness behind her. Every time she heard it she felt—"I must really find out who that delightful person is whose laughter is so infectious." And when light flooded the theatre she looked round to discover that the owner of the laugh was Burne-Jones!

So, too, his love of a boyish joke surpassed even that evinced by my uncle. Many of the stories which I have heard in this connection evade me, but I remember my sister telling me the following.

Arriving to stay with some friends one day, Burne-Jones followed his luggage upstairs, and a few moments afterwards made his appearance with a very long face. He seated himself upon a chair in, apparently, unwonted depression of spirits, and by and by his friends saw that he was rocking himself to and fro and

making faint sounds of pain as though he could not altogether suppress these. They were horrified to observe that his hands, which he seemed trying to conceal, presented a frightful appearance; the fingers seemed to be distended to more than their usual length, they were swollen and shapeless, with huge notches at the knuckles—in short, some horrible complaint had apparently distorted them in a manner which was causing him excruciating pain, and which, for an artist, presented a dreadful calamity. Suddenly Burne-Jones burst into a loud and joyous laugh. Seizing his hands, *he drew them off* and flung them across the room. They were "property" hands for private theatricals!

One day a very prim model asked my sister in horrified accents: "Is it really true what I hear, that Mr. Burne-Jones is a Mormon?" "I am afraid it is!" said my sister unblushingly. "I have heard on good authority that he has at least seven wives living in the garden at The Grange." She rushed off afterwards to tell Burne-Jones, who was enchanted. "Oh, keep it up!" he said appreciatively.

De Morgan and Burne-Jones delighted in drawing what they termed "flumbudges," weird beasts and monsters to which that generic name seemed aptly to apply. Many of these "flumbudges" are now to be seen on De Morgan tiles. They were sometimes varied by another genus known as "snockets."

One day when William De Morgan was at The Grange, Philip Burne-Jones, then a schoolboy of about twelve, did a clever caricature of him as a bas-relief, in clay. De Morgan was so delighted when he saw it, that he had it baked as a tile, and it is still in the possession of Mrs. Mackail, *née* Margaret Burne-Jones, who has also a book full of clever etched caricatures by her brother, done about the same age. One of these shows my uncle at work on the paintings at Marlborough College, with Philip Burne-Jones seated beside him; and another commemorates an incident in the life of William Morris, when Burne-Jones, in unconscious emulation of a lady I previously mentioned, had caused a live cat to be placed on a lordly dish under a cover before the poet at dinner.

When G. F. Bodley was redecorating St. Paul's Church, Brighton, he commissioned Burne-Jones to paint an altar-piece for it. Burne-Jones did a very fine triptych on a dull gold ground in the style of the Italian Primitives. By and by he painted a replica of this, slightly varied from the original, and by a curious coincidence the first picture came into the possession of a builder working for Bodley, and was eventually offered for sale as an "old master" at a curio-shop in Wardour Street.

There Bodley chanced to see it, and, entering the shop, accosted its owner with apparent indignation. "Why are you advertising that picture as an 'old master'?" he said. "It is nothing of the sort! It is painted by a man I know, a fellow named Jones, of

Caricature of William de Morgan, on a Tile.
Sir Philip Burne-Jones, Bart., *fecit ætat* 12.

Birmingham ! " The shopman, taken aback, sold it cheaply, and Bodley triumphantly related the story to Burne-Jones.

" My dear fellow," said Burne-Jones, " every one who owns that picture commits suicide. And the last man bought it at an auction with a bundle of stair-rods for £5 10*s*. ! "

When Burne-Jones was painting his picture, " The Merciful Knight," Mr. Henry Holiday asked him what the material of the cross was intended to be.

" I don't know," was the reply. " I shall go on painting till it looks like something, and directly it looks like anything at all I shall leave off ! "

At that date Burne-Jones was living in Great Russell Street, opposite the British Museum, and an old uncle was visiting him. As the latter stood at the window gazing out on the great frontage of the Museum opposite, he delivered himself oracularly of his opinion respecting it. " It lacks dignity ! " he pronounced. " Elevate it—and it will give it dignity at once ! " Thereupon Burne-Jones drew and stealthily passed to Mr. Holiday a sketch of the Museum improved as suggested. It was represented perched giddily on the top of a rickety-looking dovecot, and beneath was quoted the legend: " *Elevate* it—and it will give it dignity at once ! "

In the window of the same house was a row of flower-pots in a blue-and-white chess-board pattern, and Holiday facetiously inquired if Burne-Jones intended to play chess on these. " No, my dear fellow," was the grave reply, " they are intended solely for drafts (draughts) ! "

Whistler was in a different category. The tales respecting him were endless, for, like Wilde, he aimed at amazing a world which eschewed amazement ; but his efforts were less of a pose than the genuine expression of a personality full of comfortable self-sufficiency and wayward genius.

Once someone, to Whistler's annoyance, began praising Leighton in his presence, lauding Leighton's wonderful gift of oratory, his capacity as a linguist, his knowledge of music, etc., whereupon Whistler added nonchalantly: " And paints a little, don't he ? "

One day at his own luncheon-table, where were assembled many brilliant exponents of art and literature, Whistler was holding forth bombastically, laying down the law to his guests in a tone of superiority, finally ending up by the assertion: " But I am not arguing with you—I am only *telling* you——"

" But, Jimmy," remonstrated Du Maurier quietly, " we are not the Horse-marines ! "

My uncle used to endorse the fact that among the banded talent of the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti's was the master-mind which dominated the rest. No matter that all recognized him to be morally a man of lower ideals than themselves, the lure of his

genius and his vivid personality conquered all who came in contact with it. For a time my uncle worked with him at Blackfriars and there painted the picture, " Thoughts of the Past," which is now in the Tate Gallery, and respecting which, during a recent exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings there, it was remarked in the *Sunday Times*:

" One of the most beautiful paintings in the exhibition is R. Spencer-Stanhope's ' Thoughts of the Past,' showing a girl at the window of Rossetti's studio in Chatham Place, Blackfriars. The river view through the window is exquisite, and the colour throughout is lovely in its dainty purity. ' The Winepress ' is another fine example of this artist's work on view here, and, looking at these two pictures, we wonder why Spencer-Stanhope (1829–1908) should have been so neglected while Burne-Jones—a far weaker artist—attained wide fame and prosperity. We heard a good deal at one time about the blues of Burne-Jones, but the blues of Stanhope are still more lovely; indeed, beside the purity of his colour, that of Burne-Jones appears a trifle dirty."

Critics are at all times too prone to draw comparisons between rival workers, rather than to assign to each his individual merit. But it will be remembered that Burne-Jones himself proclaimed Stanhope to be the finest colourist in Europe, while Rossetti raved about his landscapes. Meanwhile Rossetti was principally instrumental in dissuading Burne-Jones from his original intention of entering the Ministry, and imagination dwells curiously on the possibility that the painter of " Love among the Ruins " and " The Tale of the Briar-rose " might have passed his life as a country curate listening to the plaints of old cottage-women and delivering himself of conventional platitudes from the pulpit on Sundays. One speculates in vain whether all that gorgeous imagination could indeed have lain dormant, crushed beneath the iron bands of a fixed routine of duty.

In a former publication I related how, while engaged in painting the frescoes on the roof of the Union at Oxford, both Rossetti and Burne-Jones occasionally posed as the characters they were anxious to depict. Burne-Jones, caught thus one day when arrayed in mediæval raiment, was treated to a douche of cold water from my uncle. It happened later that Rossetti had dressed himself up in ancient armour, but subsequently divesting himself of this all save the helmet, he sat down to read the paper. Burne-Jones, aloft on a scaffolding, pointed him out to my uncle, " Sir Galahad reading *The Times*," but from the elevation where they then were, they fancied that Rossetti was still completely enveloped in a protecting coat of mail. In a moment Burne-Jones, with a gentle " Hush ! " had crept along the plank and emptied a bucketful of water upon the motionless figure below. Rossetti, drenched to the skin, uprose in his wrath, and my uncle said the language which came from under that helmet shook the roof !

Rossetti, as is well known, was a keen collector of blue china,

and Mr. Holiday told me how once, at dinner at a friend's house where the courses were all placed upon the table, a large piece of salmon was brought in upon a dish which the hostess had just purchased. The china was a splendid blue, and on seeing it Rossetti exclaimed: "'Tis the very dish I intended to buy to-morrow!" He picked it up, and, absorbed in appreciation of its merits, he turned it over to see the mark on the back, with the result that the salmon fell upon the table. But so intent was he in the study of the china, and so enchanted was his hostess at his appreciation of her taste, that neither troubled about the mishap!

When the sister of Rossetti's friend, John Seddon, the architect, married Mr. Virtue Tebbs, Rossetti said that he wished to paint the bride's portrait as a wedding present. One day when she was sitting for him, she heard a curious noise in a corner of the room where she had left her hat, and, stricken by a dreadful idea, she exclaimed: "I do believe that your wombat has got into my hat and is eating it!" Rossetti rushed to the hat and found the odd little animal of which he made a pet was indeed sitting inside the already half-demolished headgear, busily munching away. "Oh, poor wombat!" he exclaimed, much after the fashion of the lady who feared that her Fido might be poisoned because he had bitten a piece out of a man's leg. "Poor wombat, indeed!" echoed Mrs. Tebbs indignantly. "I should have thought you might have pitied *me*—I shall have to go home without a hat!" But the fact that Mrs. Virtue Tebbs had to return home bareheaded troubled Rossetti not at all. "It is so indigestible!" he murmured with anxiety, removing the débris of the wombat's meal.

Miss Phillott, a first cousin of William De Morgan, has a vivid recollection of seeing Rossetti, at a party given by Mrs. Virtue Tebbs, seated in a corner feeding Mrs. William Morris with strawberries. He was carefully scraping off the cream, which was bad for her, and then solemnly presenting her with the strawberries in a spoon!

Although at this time in failing health, Mrs. Morris still retained her beauty, and sat to my sister for a picture entitled "The Hour Glass," in which her handsome, sombre face, with its haunting air of melancholy, was well adapted to the subject depicted. In an ancient chair, inlaid with ivory, a woman is seen seated. Behind her on the wall are glowing tapestries; a golden lamp of mediæval design is suspended above her head. Her draperies, in wonderful hues of yellow and russet-bronze, are thickly sewn with pearls, the delineation of which in correct perspective constituted a *tour de force*. Jewels of barbaric design accentuate the richness of her attire, and gleam again from her quaint head-dress, beneath which shows the first indication of age—her whitening locks. Meanwhile, with a brooding sorrow her gaze is fixed upon an hour-glass, clasped

in her slender fingers, wherein the sands are swiftly running out ; at her feet is a dying rose, and close to her lies a book on which are visible the words *Mors Janua Vitæ* (Death is the portal of Life). So, too, unheeded by her, outside the open doorway stands the figure of Life the Immortal, piping, piping joyously in the sunlight, in robes of azure amid the blossoming flowers of spring.

In connection with the Rossettis, Mrs. Tebbs herself told me that one day she was at a party when suddenly there uprose from a chair and paced forward into the centre of the room a little woman dressed in black, who announced solemnly, " I am Christina Rossetti ! " and having so said, returned to her seat. " It was all *à propos de bottes !* " remarked Mrs. Tebbs ; " her friends knew who she was and strangers didn't care ! "

It was in the house of John Seddon, at Birchington-on-Sea, that Rossetti died, and Mr. Seddon's daughter has sent me a letter written to her mother by Christina, the quaint, old-world phraseology of which seems typical alike of the period and the writer.

CHURCH HILL,
BIRCHINGTON-ON-SEA,
August 28, 1883.

MY DEAR MRS. SEDDON,—

You do not know how much pleasure you provided us when you lent us *Tinworth.* My mother sends you her love, and is quite glad to know something of such a man, and such an artist. I read aloud and Aunt Charlotte enjoyed our enjoyment.

I hope I did not sound " grand " when I pitied you for the end of August in London ; it is *my* usual fate to be there part, if not the whole, of that unfashionable month ! So let me not add hypocrisy to elegance. I hope you and yours have carried some Birchington bloom back to Westminster —roses warranted to stand washing and wear.

Very truly yours,
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Mr. Seddon procured for Rossetti the commission to paint the now famous reredos for Llandaff Cathedral. Rossetti was requested to make the treatment broad, light and decorative, but he ignored these instructions, and being asked for his advice in the matter, he blandly proposed that the Chapter should first be asked to allow the end of their cathedral to be painted black. None the less, he remarked subsequently that if he had the chance of such a commission again, he would spend ten years of his life in preparatory study of decorative art—a suggestive contrast to these days when the common aim is to get the maximum of effect with the minimum of labour.

[Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.

THE HOUR GLASS.

The pictures for Llandaff, however, were so long in making their appearance, and the Dean and Chapter became so weary of writing in vain for tidings of them, that the Bishop of Llandaff, having to go to town to take his place in the House of Lords, proposed that he should call at Rossetti's rooms in Blackfriars to ask to see them, and thus discover the reason of their non-arrival and of Rossetti's silence. But the maid who opened the door there at once informed him that Rossetti was absent, and on hearing what he had come about, she exclaimed: "Oh lor! sir, Mr. Rossetti don't paint now—he's *married*!"

It may be added that Rossetti subsequently painted a water-colour for John Seddon, "Giotto painting the Portrait of Dante in the Chapel of the Arena at Florence," which was resold about twenty-five years ago for eighty times the price originally paid for it.

One story of Rossetti preserved by Mr. Seddon is perhaps known, but will bear repetition. When Ford Madox Brown was engaged in preparing for a special exhibition of his works, he announced his decision to have brown for the covers of the catalogues, as being most appropriate. Rossetti, on learning this intention, said: "My dear fellow, you will then have only half done the thing; they should have a drawing on them of the *mad ox* crossing the *ford*, to make them complete."

"And a decoration of *maggots brown* for the border, no doubt!" was the rejoinder.

In 1861 John Seddon designed a cabinet of oak about nine feet long and five high. It was intended as a utilitarian piece of furniture to hold his professional drawings in his office. It was therefore severely simple in design, its surface being slightly polished and inlaid with root of oak and other woods of varying tones, ebony, box, mahogany, etc., and there were ten panels, four large and the rest smaller. Being intimate with the members of the decorative firm then newly established by William Morris, he gave them a commission to have these painted with subjects illustrative of the Fine Arts, Architecture, Painting, Sculpture and Music, with other subsidiary arts. This was one of the earliest works undertaken by the now historic firm, and at the suggestion of Ford Madox Brown, he, with Rossetti and Burne-Jones, embodied Seddon's idea in a series of gorgeous panels illustrative of imaginary incidents in "King René's Honeymoon," that royal amateur, the father of our unfortunate Margaret, Queen to Henry VI of England, being known to have attained considerable skill in all those arts which it was designed to represent. Val Prinsep, William Morris and others aided in the further adornment of the cabinet, till the whole represented a conjunction of the genius of many brilliant contemporaries. It was exhibited in 1862, and is now in the possession of Mrs. de Hoghton Birch, the daughter of Mr. Seddon.

The great aim of Mr. Seddon in commissioning the decoration of this cabinet, expressed in his own words, was "to realize the unity of the several fine arts and their accessories." He was a prominent leader in the movement which strove to promote the production of artistic furniture. Apart from the revolution in house decoration effected by William Morris, he, together with Ford Madox Brown, Holman Hunt and others of the fraternity, turned their attention to designing furniture, but, save when painting was employed in ornamentation, the results were characterized by simplicity and severity rather than any intricate workmanship or beauty of design. In the possession of Mr. Holman Hunt's daughter, for instance, is a table fashioned for her father by Ford Madox Brown. But in appearance it is plain and unprepossessing, its sole attempt at ornamentation being one spiral rail underneath, and the chief interest attached to it is to be found in the thought of all the famous people who have gathered round it. Stanhope, on the contrary, as we have seen, was the creator of cabinets and clocks in which exquisite colouring and design vied with great beauty of decoration.

After the latter's death, in 1908, I visited Holman Hunt to hear from his lips stories of bygone days in which my uncle had figured, and he showed me specimens of his own handicraft, chairs which were quaint and graceful in conception. "Stanhope was very enthusiastic about the movement for creating furniture which should be as much an expression of art as are pictures," he said; "but we were all bitten with the notion of attempting a desperate reaction from the stolid, uninspiring seats and tables of Victorian days." And he dwelt with gentle cynicism on the Philistine nature of the British appreciation for art in all its phases. "My secretary," he said, "going by train the other day, heard two ladies talking. 'Have you been to the Academy?' said one. 'No,' replied the other plaintively, 'and it's such a nuisance, the servants have destroyed the copy of the *Morning Post* that told one *which are the pictures to look at*!'"

The house in which Holman Hunt lived in Melbury Road was built on what had once formed part of the site of Little Holland House, where so many memorable men had met and so many memorable scenes had taken place; and as he talked to me, from a tree which had once stood in that famous garden the song of the birds came in through the open window, and the sunshine fell upon the picturesque face of the blind painter, while away in a corner of the room his last work, ere darkness overtook him, "The Lady of Shalott," glowed in its rays like an embodiment of living jewels.

Holman Hunt died two years later, and his wife subsequently told me that he said to her: "I want you to give me a promise. I have absolute confidence in your judgment, and after my death I want you to go into my study with a knife and cut to ribbons

all works of mine which you consider are not up to my best standard of achievement—unfinished studies or inferior paintings of any description. It is most unfair to the posthumous reputation of any artist that work which he himself would have condemned should be preserved by mistaken kindness to live after him, and to detract from his standard of attainment."

For a whole year Mrs. Hunt said that she had not the moral courage to face such an ordeal. At last one day, with the strong approval of Sir William Richmond, she armed herself with a knife, went alone into the studio, and slashed everything which she felt came under the category of what her husband would have considered unworthy, even including an unfinished portrait of herself.

I have heard that Holman Hunt's famous picture *The Scapegoat* was seen by Sir Cuthbert Quilter when a boy of ten, who said: "When I am grown up I mean to buy that!" And he did. Only people who have been in the East can adequately appreciate the powerful sense of atmosphere conveyed in the lonely landscape depicted, yet I am not sure that the highest praise bestowed upon the picture was not that expressed by a crude critic who was heard thus acclaiming its realism: "That horrible old goat—I could not sit in a room with it on the walls—*one can smell it*!"

At No. 6 in the same road for many years lived George Frederick Watts, under whom my uncle, Mr. Roddam Spencer-Stanhope, first studied art, so that, as a young man, he was constantly at Little Holland House, where Watts, as a bachelor, had a joint establishment with Mr. Thoby Prinsep and his wife.

I have heard my uncle relate how when the famous painter first became acquainted with Ellen Terry, then a lovely girl of sixteen, her beauty and her somewhat unprotected position much troubled his chivalrous nature, and he consulted a friend about her. "I am thinking of adopting Ellen Terry," he explained. "What do you think of this?" "I think she is too young!" was the answer. Later, Watts reverted to the subject. "I have thought over your advice," he said, "and I am thinking of marrying Ellen Terry—what do you say?" "I think she is too old!" was the reply.

So it proved, but incompatible as was such a union between Watts with his serious aims and high spiritual ideals and a lovely, wayward child whose undeveloped genius was of a totally different order, my uncle always said that the person who wrecked the marriage was Mrs. Prinsep. She never ceased to treat Ellen as a naughty child who must be scolded and made obedient, and a high-spirited, unconventional girl naturally resented this treatment, while Watts, absorbed in his art, was little aware of the mischief which was preparing.

One summer when my uncle was living at Sandroyd, Cobham, a house which was built for him by Philip Webb, the Prinseps

took a house near Esher, and Ellen Terry, as a bride, was brought over to luncheon with my aunt. My aunt described her as strikingly lovely, with brilliant eyes and very beautiful hair, but quite a schoolgirl and a decided tomboy. After luncheon, while my uncle and Watts paced to and fro in the garden talking, my aunt remained with Mrs. Prinsep and Ellen in the drawing-room. Suddenly the latter, with an air of supreme boredom, leant back over the arm of the chair in which she was seated, and, shaking her head to and fro, loosened the pins from her hair which tumbled about her shoulders like a cloak of shining gold. My aunt could only gaze in delight at the beauty of the girl as she sat there swaying her head gently from side to side while the mass of shimmering hair shrouded her and swept the floor. But Mrs. Prinsep was horrified. "Ellen! Ellen!" she cried, "put up your hair instantly!" And Ellen, flashing a wrathful glance at her tormentor, grasped the waving mass of gold, coiled it carelessly upon her head, and, stabbing it with pins, sat there looking lovelier than ever, a petulant, scolded child.

Watts, on account of his work with my uncle, was well known to all the earlier generation of my family, and was staying in Yorkshire with my grandfather at the date of my mother's engagement. During that visit he did a lovely sketch of my aunt, Alice Stanhope, but unfortunately, in the circumstances, my mother was too much occupied to give him a sitting. At a later date he professed great admiration for my eldest brother and sister as types of beautiful childhood, no less than he did subsequently for the achievement of the latter as an artist. Once when he heard that he had just missed me at a house where he came to call, I was told that he remarked in jest: "I *wish* I had known! I should like to have seen what more that remarkable family can produce!"

It was on a prosaic errand that I at last met him. I had called to give the present Mrs. Watts the character of a servant who was leaving us, and at the close of this domestic business, she said: "Signor said I was not to let you go without his seeing you." Thereupon she led me into the studio, and the scene which met my eyes stamped itself unforgettably upon my imagination. Against the light was the great statue of Physical Energy, which, reared aloft in the enclosed space, looked colossal. A scaffolding was raised round it, and on this, with the great white beast towering above him, Watts stood, infinitesimal of aspect beside that gigantic emanation of his mind—a frail old man creating with indomitable will that splendid image of Eternal Youth.

My first impression of him was that of a man in whom intense spirituality had dominated, almost annihilated, the material; he seemed curiously ethereal, with the serenity of a being accustomed to dwell in the presence of the Unseen. I was interested many years afterwards to find a letter from my grandmother recording

an exactly similar impression when she first met him nearly half a century before. "Anything more ethereal than poor Watts is impossible to imagine!" she wrote to my grandfather. "He looks like a being already half in another and a finer world. I never met any man who conveyed such a sense of the soul shining through the body." Indeed, the inscription which Watts caused to be placed on a sundial for his wife was the keynote of his life, the epitome of his creed: "*The Utmost for the Highest.*" "That is the best thing I ever did!" he said once, pointing out the sentence to a friend.

Yet our conversation that day in the studio drifted to material matters. Watts told me that he always rose at 5.30 in order to be at work by six in the summer. He lamented how all his life his delicate health had proved a grievous handicap to achievement, making of existence a thing to be endured, not enjoyed. "But it was that very fact which first turned my thoughts to art," he said. "Had I been robust like other young men and able to indulge in outdoor sports or a more active life, I should probably never have developed the artistic side of my nature." He added that recently he had put himself under the *regimen* of the American, Dr. Salusbury, which consisted of a diet of pounded raw meat, and spoke with enthusiasm of the result. "It has acted like magic," he said. "Now in my old age I for the first time know what it is to feel well, and the increased vigour of brain and body is incredible."

"I tell my cook," said Mrs. Watts, reverting to the object of my visit, "that when she does her duty and prepares the food carefully, she too is aiding in the production of the pictures!"

"Before, when those dreadful attacks passed off," Watts added, "I used to be so exhausted that I could only lie still, thankful for the mere relief from acute suffering." I was interested, because all my life I have suffered from similar attacks, which come on without apparent reason at a few days' interval, and utterly incapacitate me throughout their duration. But one difference I remarked at which he laughed. "Only I never lie still! Directly I am better, I don't want to lose a minute—my one idea is to pack as much into life as possible—work, play, experience—in the short interval before the next comes on!"

Watts told Miss Mary Millais that when the statue of Physical Energy was removed to Africa, its absence, after he had worked at it for so long, filled him with an intense loneliness. "Yet I was glad to finish it," he added, "for I was so ill I did not think I could live another week." Her father used to relate how one evening, when a large party at Little Holland House were enjoying an excellent dinner, Watts, seated apart at a little table, could scarcely swallow the plain fare which was all that he dared to touch. At last, such were his sufferings, that he was forced to go upstairs to bed, while Mrs. Prinsep rushed away to look after him, to ensure

that he had a hot-water bottle and every care. After his departure, Leighton remarked to Millais how sad it was to see Watts always suffering. "One feels it must kill him before long," he said. But Millais leant back in his chair and smiled. "Mark my words," he said, "Watts will see us all out. When every one at this table is dead, Watts will still be going strong." And so it proved. Every one then seated at the table predeceased Watts, who, still delicate and frail, was living and working when they were in their graves.

It was many years after Watts's death when I first visited his home, Limnerslease, at Compton. Unlike Leighton House, which always affects me like a body bereft of the once brilliant soul which animated it, Compton still seems permeated with the spirit of the man who once lived there. A sense of serenity seems to pervade it, an abiding beauty and harmony. This is due to the influence of Mrs. Watts, who, subordinating her own very remarkable genius to the task of keeping prominent that of her husband, seems to perpetuate not only his memory, but the atmosphere which he created.

We motored down to luncheon with Mrs. Watts that day—a long-deferred expedition. A lovely run through Guildford and over the Hog's Back brought us to where her house stands in a beautiful situation embowered by trees. Limnerslease was built by Sir Ernest George, and apart from its attractive architecture and situation, I was even more struck by the consummate taste displayed in the arrangement of the rooms. The general effect of soft yet clear lighting, of harmonious yet rich colouring, the gorgeous tones of the pictures upon the walls, the old Venetian brocades which enhanced the scheme of decoration, even the disposal of the flowers, which, in vases of delicate design, formed bright splashes of colour against some sombre background, all in turn charmed the eye and formed a whole at once pleasing and restful. This was enhanced by the long, low picturesque windows to each room, gay with glowing autumn blossoms, and revealing beyond a vista of enchanting garden with foliage rich in autumn tints.

The room into which we were first shown was partly lighted by a skylight draped in pale yellow, which cast a warm tint like sunshine over the contents. On the wall was a beautiful Titian of a lady in a pink dress, probably an early work of the artist. Another picture of the Italian school by an unknown painter was very striking in the richness and depth of the red robe in which the lady was dressed, while her face, which was curiously modern in aspect, was full of power and expression. In contrast to her strongly defined personality, in the hall was a typical Rossetti, a lady pale, plaintive and languishing, with the ethereal yet dominant grace which Rossetti loved to depict. Sliding doors opening out of the hall led into the studio where Watts had once worked and dreamed, and where his unfinished portrait of himself stood upon an easel

accentuating the sense of his surviving presence; while among innumerable objects of interest was a threefold drawing of Little Holland House, reminiscent of a long period of his life, of which each separate sketch is adorned by verses written by Mr. Thoby Prinsep.

During luncheon in the charming dining-room, with a bowl of autumn roses on the table and the flowers at the window vying with them in beauty, the conversation drifted to the Pre-Raphaelites and their work, to the many noted people who had sat where we were then sitting, artists, politicians, literati. . . . By and by we wandered out to see the galleries. In the first are specimens of sculpture; outside stands the cast of the famous statue of Physical Energy, and within, among many exhibits of interest, the cast for the statue of Tennyson and his dog at Lincoln. In the two larger galleries beyond are the pictures, some of which are exchanged from time to time with the Tate Gallery, while a long corridor connecting the two is full of the photographs and reproductions of other works. We then went on to see the picturesque cemetery on the hill-side adjacent, which contains a building unlike any other in the whole of England—the mortuary chapel, executed in red brick and terra-cotta from the designs of Mrs. Watts. The modelling was carried out exclusively in the grounds of Limnerslease by a village class under her auspices, and the result is a marvellous piece of work, both in its beauty and its symbolism. Looking up through the subdued light, the angels shine out iridescent in the dimness, grouped with wonderful grace of outline and glory of colouring.[1] . . .

Not far from this spot rest the ashes of Watts and a tiny but very perfect recumbent effigy of the great painter. The cruciform church, about a quarter of a mile away, with its wonderful screen, has often been described, but we saw it under specially beautiful auspices in the sunshine of a brilliant autumn day, and massed with blossoms and fruit from the recent harvest festival. A war memorial designed by Mrs. Watts, which does service as a lamp, bears the inscription:

"Through the Ages one clear flame of sacrifice has burned, and by its light we see God."

We had not time to visit the pottery factory which Mrs. Watts has established at Compton, but she told me how, when she was starting it, she consulted William De Morgan respecting the design for a kiln which a young mechanic had drawn up for her. De Morgan had then just returned from Egypt, where he had been employed by the Egyptian Government to make an exhaustive

[1] The chapel is described at length and illustrated in *The Studio* for December, 1898, and the interpretation of its symbolism is to be found in two pamphlets, "The Word and the Pattern" and "The Key to Symbols."

report on the possibility of pottery manufacture in that country, and he took the design of the budding mechanic in his hands and surveyed it thoughtfully. Then, in his quaint, slow voice, he delivered his conclusion in typical fashion: "I don't see, my dear Mrs. Watts, why you should have the advantage of this young man's ignorance!"

III

It is difficult not to think of William De Morgan as forming one of the Pre-Raphaelite group and their following; yet although intimate with all the circle, and in a measure an outcome of the movement, with its rarefied mingling of realism, of idealism, and gorgeous, arresting fantasy, he remained a being always apart both in his output and his personality. My first impression of him was that of a tall man, slender of figure, with a curiously striking physiognomy. So unusual was the development of his head and wide brow that it seemed to throw the rest of his face out of proportion, making his features appear smaller than was actually the case. I promptly recognized all manner of strange possibilities in that remarkable head; but it took half a lifetime to appreciate to its full the unvarying sweetness and gentleness of disposition which was combined with his fine, versatile intellect. De Morgan could be strong and yet tender; determined and yet unfailingly gentle. During the many years that I knew him I never once saw him out of temper, and this despite the acute strain and wearing conditions under which he was striving to achieve strenuous mental work. Moreover, his was always, if unconsciously, the rôle of a peacemaker. Wheresoever he might be, any friction which threatened was gently brushed aside by him with some quaint remark which at once dissipated anger and created laughter.

Mr. Eustace Swanwick, who knew him well in early youth, endorses this same impression:

> De Morgan's atmosphere was always calm and gracious. . . . I always had a profound respect for him as one of the gentle men with a humorous view of life, yet taking it seriously for himself; always ready to do a kindness with the air of "no trouble at all," his natural restless energy toned down to the steady glow of persistency. The power thus gained was shown in his literary efforts in later life. These seemed to be thrown off in great volume, but with ease.

It was whilst we were paying the visit in Italy described in a previous chapter that my mother received the petition from my sister, "May I have a run-away wedding?" and sent the comprehensive answer: "By all means; the only difficulty I see is, there is no one to run away from!" Thus was inaugurated the happy marriage between Evelyn and William De Morgan, the story of which I told long years afterwards in their Lives. And respecting this a criticism was sent to me by Miss Phillott, whom I have before

mentioned, De Morgan's cousin and contemporary, who shared his duties at the Academy Schools and is herself an artist of delicate imagination and fine technique.

"There is one point," she writes, "on which I, having known William so much longer than you have, may venture to offer criticism. You picture him as constitutionally cheerful and hopeful. My memory recalls him as subject to states of serious depression—but only *before* his marriage. Evelyn cured all that. She would never allow him to mope. She gave him new vigour, and brought into his life just what he wanted—her own splendid courage."

I have heard that at the time of her engagement my sister was painting a very lovely picture of angels blowing trumpets in the dawn. She had previously depicted various radiant visions of cherubim and seraphim thus occupied, as she loved to image the gorgeous raiment of the ethereal beings, their feathered wings and the imagined grace of limb and gesture engendered by the uplifting of their golden instruments. De Morgan, calling on a friend one day, chuckled softly to himself and then explained: "Evelyn is so angry to-day because one of her brothers, seeing her latest design of angels with trumpets, exclaimed contemptuously, 'What —*more* boys with pea-shooters!'"

I remember William De Morgan's mother about the date of the marriage, a handsome, picturesque old lady—imperturbably serious, so she seemed to me—with an intellect as keen as a blade, wide sympathies and undiminished enthusiasm. I am told that George Eliot used often to go to the little house in Cheyne Row where Sophia for many years lived with her surviving son and daughters, and that the great novelist has described its inmates as the family of Meyrick in *Daniel Deronda*. Although Mrs. Meyrick bore little physical resemblance to Mrs. De Morgan, being depicted as a smaller woman, less dignified and more vivacious, Hans Meyrick was in many respects a lifelike portrait of William De Morgan, and Hans' sister Mab bore considerable resemblance to Mary De Morgan. In common with many writers, George Eliot constructed a fabric of fiction on a substratum of fact, deftly disguising the latter under certain misleading traits. Thus, in her description of Hans, blond hair is substituted for chestnut; but it is not difficult to recognize William, with his "bossy, irregular brow, and other quaintnesses" . . . a youth who had eccentricities enough for a Charles Lamb; a "lovable creature," with "fits of impish recklessness," an aptitude for Gaverni-caricatures, and a face into which, when lit up by a joke, "there came sudden creases about the mouth and eyes which might have been moulded by the soul of an ancient humorist." With equally graphic touch she describes his sisters, their neat dress, guileless of crinolines, their hair fastened back *à la chinoise*, adding:

" Their faces seemed full of speech as if their minds had been shelled, after the manner of horse-chestnuts, and become brightly visible."

Personally, I remember Mary De Morgan, the only one of them I ever saw, exclaiming: " How I should hate to be rich! Half the fun in life would be gone if one had not the excitement of planning how far money would go! " And in this she was unquestionably sincere, though it is not a form of fun likely to appeal to many!

Dr. Head, who inaugurated evening entertainments with dancing at the Whitington Club, Whitechapel, in an endeavour to keep lads from loafing about the streets, told me that while the innovation met with considerable opposition and misunderstanding, Mary De Morgan was his most loyal coadjutor. Delicate and constantly suffering, he relates, she never failed to attend each gathering, where she played dance-music or accompaniments for songs indefatigably, and, in consequence, she had many proposals. " 'Ave you got anybody, Miss? " said a coster lad earnestly to her one evening after singing to her playing, " 'cos if not, me and you'd make sech a good entertainment! "

" What queer things women are! " said William one day in regard to Mary. " Yesterday she flung a bottle at my head because she said I was too superstitious, and to-day she wants to pray with me because I am too atheistical! "

Respecting George Eliot, William De Morgan told me the following story which he heard from Mrs. Katherine Macquoid, whose works of fiction began to appear in 1859, and who lived to be a nonagenarian. For many years Mrs. Macquoid occupied a house in Chelsea, and when George Eliot married Mr. Cross and came to settle in the same neighbourhood, Mrs. Macquoid told her husband that she intended to call upon the new resident. " But," she informed De Morgan, " before I had an opportunity of doing so, a curious thing happened. One night I woke suddenly and saw the figure of George Eliot standing between the bed and the wall. The apparition was distinct and unmistakable. I heard a voice giving me a message and then the phantom vanished. Next morning I could remember nothing of the message except ' sixty-one,' which I feared meant I should die at the age of sixty-one. When I saw my son, however, that day, he told me that George Eliot was dead. She had died about the time I saw the apparition, and at the age of sixty-one."

The death of the famous novelist, as is well known, occurred a few months after her marriage with Mr. Cross, which promised a happy and congenial companionship, and I may perhaps digress to mention my own brief acquaintance with George Eliot's husband.

Dining at the house of Mr. Waters, the well-known author, I was sent in to dinner with a man whose name I did not catch, though he had learnt mine. It happened that a *cause célèbre* was then in progress in which one of the principal *dramatis personæ*

bore my surname, the latter being thus, at the moment, conspicuously placarded all over London. As we wended our way to the dining-room, therefore, my unknown companion turned to me and opened conversation by observing brightly: "Not *the* Mrs. Stirling, I presume?" "No," I rejoined. "I am sorry to disappoint you, but it is *not* 'the Mrs. Stirling!'" After such a promising commencement, I found him exceptionally agreeable and witty, but it was not till afterwards that I learnt his identity.

Four days later, dining at the house of Mr. Wray Skilbeck, editor of *The Nineteenth Century and After*, I was, to my amusement, again sent in to dinner with Mr. Cross. "*The* Mrs. Stirling again!" he exclaimed, as we once more wended our way to the dining-room. Yet after thus being paired off at successive dinner-parties twice within a week, from that day to this we have never met again!

One of George Eliot's servants went to live with Mrs. Phillott, William De Morgan's aunt. Accustomed to an intellectual atmosphere, she took note of passing events in the artistic and literary world, and one day was discovered reading a disparaging Press criticism of Burne-Jones. "Por Mr. Jones!" she observed feelingly. "What a shaime! for I'm *sure* he does 'is best!"

Two almost equally pleasing criticisms may be added. Mr. Sandys had his picture, "Judith with the Head of Holofernes," on show to friends one day, when a Norwich magnate, who prided himself on being a connoisseur, came up to him pompously. "My dear sir," pronounced this enthusiast, "I must congratulate you most warmly on having so faithfully rendered the characteristic expression of my favourite heroine, *fair Juliet*!"

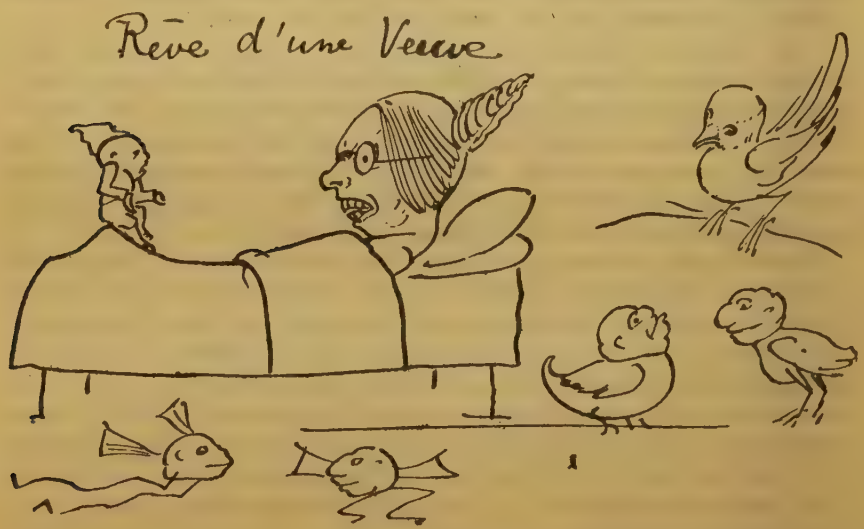
Once in an attempt to avert the destruction of an ancient building, the Emmanuel Almshouses, near Buckingham Gate, Albert Moore, at a protest meeting, read aloud a poem of his own composition dealing with the subject in question. William Morris, who found that this effort, even while treating comprehensively the grievance to be ventilated, yet scarcely accorded with his own conception of poetry, expressed his opinion to Dr. Philip Norman. "It reminds me," said Morris, "of an American critic's review of a similar production: '*After all, it states all the facts; and occasionally rhymes!*'"

IV

Long years before I met William De Morgan he had started life as a potter in the basement of 40 Fitzroy Square, part of the house being then occupied by Miss Herford, who actually achieved the first opening of the Academy Schools to women by the following ruse. At certain times would-be male students sent up drawings to prove their capacity for admission. She consulted Mulready, and he approved of her scheme of sending a drawing signed only

" L. Herford." It was passed as the work of a man ; she entered the schools ; and women ever since have enjoyed that privilege.

Miss Herford used to give " open evenings " at which a congenial party of friends assembled to pass cheery hours devoted to talk and music. Her niece, Miss Helen Paterson, a celebrated artist, who subsequently married William Allingham, the poet, recalls how, at those gatherings, De Morgan used to sit, with pencil and paper in hand, drawing one absurd thing after another round a sheet of paper. He did not know beforehand what was going to trickle from his brain, his ideas flowed without intention ; often he would begin at the feet and work absently up to the head of some impressive monster. One of the party used to sing a song in which occurred the words " A brave barque with my darling flies." Listening dreamily one evening, William drew an illustration of a man in a boat tortured by a black cloud of buzzing insects, under which he wrote the legend " My darling flies ! " Another time he sketched the *Rêve d'une veuve* in which a lady of unprepossessing appearance is gazing vivaciously at a very plain little Cupid perched upon her toes, while love-birds hover round her.

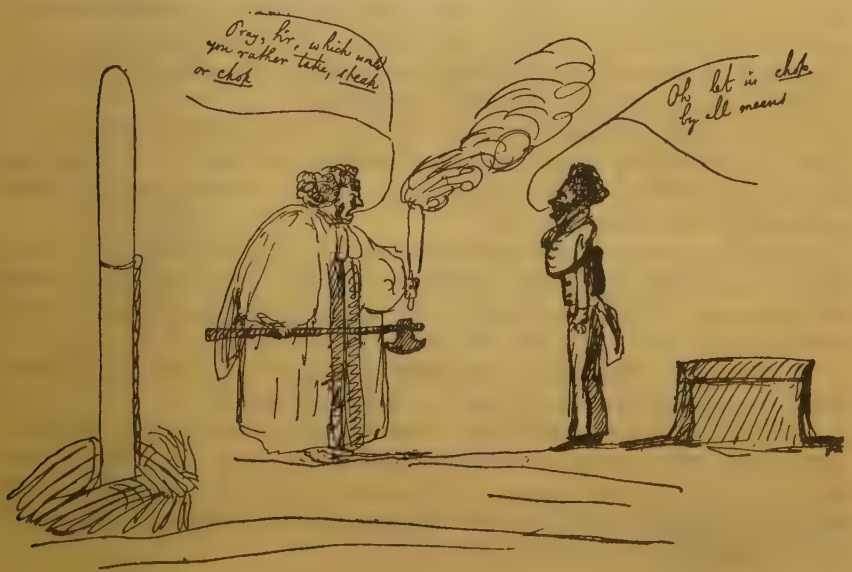


Some years after those merry evenings at Miss Herford's, De Morgan indited to the little son of William Allingham the pictorial letter shown overleaf, which he pretended was sent by his sister Mary.

A top hat was always a fruitful subject of jest and illustration —it was the outward and visible sign of the soul of the Philistine— the crowning concession to the Correctitudes. When Burne-Jones accepted a Baronetcy, De Morgan drew an idyll of " A Baronet in too large a Hat."

The headgear was represented as abnormally large, partly to indicate the abnormal respectability of which it was the emblem, and partly in token that the wearer was not suffering from the complaint known as "swollen head." It may be added that although William's father, Augustus De Morgan, was likewise conspicuously immune from that peculiarity, so massive were the actual proportions of his head that it was a standard joke at London University that the hat of Professor Carey Foster would go inside the hat of Professor De Morgan, "brim and all."

Professor De Morgan died long before I knew any of the family, but there have drifted into my possession many funny sketches drawn by his pen, of which, unfortunately, the jest is now lost in obscurity; one, however, is sufficiently obvious. A heretic is standing in front of an inquisitor, and the latter, indicating a headsman's axe and a pole surrounded by faggots, inquires politely, which he will have, "steak (stake) or chop?" To which the heretic replies pointedly: "Let us chop!"



I have heard William describe his walks, when a youth, with his neighbour, Thomas Carlyle, and how he found it impossible to understand what the old man said—so broad was the Sage's Caledonian accent and so rasping his voice when he became animated or irascible. He also added that, to use a homely phrase, it was never safe to "speak after" Carlyle, "who had the mind of a poet and 'decorated' all he said or thought."

There were occasions, nevertheless, when the situation which he described required no grandiloquent rhetoric. One day Sophia De Morgan discovered him mopping his face and hair with an air of tragedy. "She has just thrown a cup of tea over me!" he explained pathetically, indicating Mrs. Carlyle.

Once Mrs. De Morgan received from Carlyle a volume of Essays on Spiritualism, a subject in which she was much interested. On the fly-leaf of the gift she subsequently wrote under the date November 18, 1878:—

"This book was sent to Mr. Carlyle, who found it '*such abominable and execrable nonsense that he was going to throw it into the fire when he was reminded that Mrs. De Morgan might like it,*' on which he kindly sent it to me."

In a previous publication I stated that De Morgan found the Sage a taciturn companion, for Carlyle was at times morose of mood and inclined to consider his youthful comrade beneath notice even as a listener; but in an interesting letter from Mrs. Litchfield, *née* Emma Darwin, author of *A Century of Family Papers*, she points out that I used a misleading word, since, although Carlyle could discourse for hours on the fact that silence was golden, so uninterruptedly loquacious was he that Mrs. Carlyle complained that she could neither get rest at night nor wedge in a remark by day to her own friends in her own home. I agreed that the word "grumpy," if not too colloquial, would have more aptly conveyed my meaning, and Mrs. Litchfield replied:

"'Grumpy' certainly would be the word, not 'taciturn.' I think he (Carlyle) was 'grumpy' when he said to Allingham, one of his faithful walker-out companions: '*Allingham, you have a tendency to become a bore!*'

"And not very sweet when he arrived to dine with my uncle, Hensleigh Wedgwood, and Mrs. Carlyle told, as a good joke, that he had said, 'Woman—am I to be stifled because you have a toothache?' as he opened the carriage window.

"The only sentence I remember when he came to us at Down was his calling Grote's history 'a fetid quagmire.'

"When his niece came for a week-end to Down, she came in her day-gown over her evening-dress, as she was not allowed the expense of a cab to Charing Cross, and could only bring per 'bus what she could carry, so she invented this original method of conveying the necessary clothes!

"I think both my father and mother found Carlyle's speech difficult to understand in his early days."

One of De Morgan's earliest friends was Horatio Lucas, famous in the artistic world for his fine etchings. They were students together at University College, and their friendship rapidly developed, to be cut short only by the premature death of Lucas at the age of thirty-four. Mrs. Lucas writes:

"After I married, in 1863, he knew he would always find us at home on Friday evenings, and never let one pass without spending it with us. Everything was discussed in these evenings—stained glass, pottery, books, drawing, etching, etc. *Great Expectations* was coming out in numbers, and we used to read and discuss Pip and Mrs. Joe Gargery, in whom William took a particular delight, as also the Bab Ballads, which first came out weekly in a vulgar paper called *Fun*.

"We sat round the hearth, with its mantelpiece of beautiful Burne-Jones tiles, laughing as only young people can laugh. We had built the smoking-room, and for a year it could not be papered, and the whitewashed surface presented a tempting space for charcoal drawings. Accordingly one evening, William De Morgan, Henry Holiday, Simeon Solomon, and one or two others besides the master of the house, left specimens of their skill on the walls—to the delight of all beholders. I was very sorry when, after a year, they were covered by a paper, but by then they were getting a little blurred. It was a case of Fra Lippo Lippi when, as a boy, he first let himself go on a whitewashed wall."

For his friend De Morgan did another piece of work which remains unique in his output—two cabinets painted respectively in 1869 and 1871, which represent the only paintings on wood he ever produced. On one he did a fine decoration of allegorical paintings upon panels; the other represents a delightful series of pictures illustrating St. George rescuing the Princess from the dragon, the latter a glorified "flumbudge," whom the Princess finally leads home, cringing and cowed, with a ribbon attached to its nose like a pet-dog.

It was greatly owing to the influence of Lucas that William turned his attention to the ceramic work in which his friend was also experimenting, and in those days they both had their pottery fired at Mortlock's, in Oxford Street.

Years after, when his versatile imagination had found a fresh bent, De Morgan dedicated his first novel to this long-dead friend of his youth: "In token of a very old friendship and an unforgotten time." On sending Mrs. Lucas a copy of the first edition, he wrote: "I did not put 'In memory of——' as it always sounds to me so like a tombstone." By the curious coincidence which seemed to dog all that he did, a letter from Mrs. Lucas crossed his, saying, "I am glad you did not put '*In memory of*——' as it always sounds so like a tombstone!"

When De Morgan first started his experiments in lustre, these were carried on surreptitiously in the little kiln which he erected

at the foot of the garden in Cheyne Row, and one of his earliest successful achievements he took to exhibit to Dr. Head; but the latter told me the embryo potter had not dared to risk putting the glaze on outside the pot, the lustre was in the interior! In contrast to his interest in pottery, however, De Morgan disliked most china, and always confessed to have an incurable aversion to Sèvres. "I try not to be prejudiced," he said, "but it sets my teeth on edge!"

In all his artistic work it was the scientific element, the passion for experiment, which appealed to him. Once he had achieved a beautiful thing, it ceased to interest him, and his one idea was to unmake and refashion it on different lines. For ever there was in his imagination a higher rung of the ladder to be attained, with extended vision and greater scope for effort which made of little count the vantage-ground previously gained. George Eliot, with her unerring insight, early recognized the eternal anomaly presented by his many-sided temperament. For throughout his life his capacity for painstaking exactitude in regard to the minutiæ of experimental problems contrasted with a frequent neglect of essentials which alone could make that work of practical utility; his accuracy in regard to memoranda and figures compared with his vagueness in respect to simple finance, and his enthusiasm for the thing uncreated with his indifference to the thing created. The American reviewer showed acumen who, hailing an unusual departure in De Morgan's output, announced: "This is just what we should have expected of Mr. De Morgan—the Unexpected!"

Thus it was that when he painted "The Sorcerer's Daughter," his most successful picture, Evelyn promptly sent it away to the country, and he was never allowed to have it back, for otherwise she knew he would immediately paint it out and do it all over again in a different pigment. Thus it was, too, that his inventions were often highly ingenious rather than practical, as a picture in my possession may serve to illustrate.

My sister rarely adopted any of his intricate methods, but in this one instance she has done so, and the lovely little painting entitled "The Soul's Prison House" is remarkable for the purity and the richness of its colouring. The subject is treated with a great simplicity. In a dungeon a young girl is seated. Behind her fair head a barred window gives hint of the glad outer world from which she is excluded; fungi protrude from the red flooring of her cell; even the seat on which she rests is suggestive of a tomb; and as her great starry eyes look out questioningly from a face of haunting sadness, she is holding a ribbon scroll on which are inscribed the words of St. Augustine: "Illuminate, oh illuminate my blind soul which sitteth in darkness and in the shadow of death." Meanwhile, in contrast to the subdued note sustained in her surroundings, her dress is arresting in its soft brilliance. Her draperies

[*Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.*

THE SOUL'S PRISON HOUSE.

"Illuminate, oh illuminate my blind soul
Which sitteth in darkness, and the Shadow of Death."
—*Saint Augustine.*

(*From a picture in the possession of Mrs. Stirling.*)

are of a rare shade of green, the reverse side of which, at sleeves and hem, reveals a delicate shade of pink; her waist and bust are swathed in a sash of rich bronze. Of this picture Evelyn wrote:

"'The Soul's Prison House' was painted in London and is framed in an old Italian frame which I picked up in Wardour Street. It is painted in a method my husband invented that we used to call the 'process.' The colours were ground in glycerine and spirit, and the ground used to paint on was a porous gesso preparation on canvas; the glycerine, of course, never dried, and when the picture was finished it was removed from the paint by means of a sucker plastered on the back of the canvas. This sucker drew out the matrix, that is to say, the glycerine with which the picture had been painted; the surface of the picture was then flooded with oil, or oil and varnish, to replace the glycerine. It was a ticklish business, and I only completed two pictures in this method, as, though it has a great attraction in the working and a superiority in the tone, the hygrometric quality of the glycerine was very troublesome, and obliged one to keep the studio at an even temperature day and night."

Apparently the artist realized that not even for the rare brilliance of hue thus obtainable was it worth the fret of treating a picture like some invalid in sorry plight—laboriously keeping it at an even temperature, poulticing its back with care, and knowing meanwhile that the slightest error in judgment or lapse from the prescribed *regimen* would irretrievably wreck the result of so much labour.

Much has been said of late about supposed messages from departed spirits delivered by means of a reference given to some book and line, clearly indicated. Not long since a picture by Evelyn came into Christie's called "The Angel of Death." I was afraid of losing it, and went off to bid long before it was likely to come on for sale. My husband did not know I had started, and lingered over the fire writing letters on the back of a book which he had taken at random out of the bookcase.

He finished his correspondence, and then casually opening the volume on which he had been writing, he found that it was Horace. At the same moment his gaze stayed aimlessly upon a sentence which he read more than once before he grasped its significance. This was "*Impudens Orcum moror*," "Shamelessly I keep Death waiting!" Now De Morgan was devoted to Horace, and in life was always quoting him and consulting my husband about favourite passages. The incident was curiously like one of the freakish tricks which he would have delighted in playing! My husband delayed no longer. He hastened off to the auction, where we bought the picture.

It was indeed characteristic of William and Evelyn De Morgan in later years that few people mentioned them without a smile. Their delightful irresponsibility, their dauntless pluck, their complete lack of worldly wisdom and their selfless absorption in their work, their unvarying knack of viewing the great things and the small of life from a standpoint all their own, rendered them

refreshingly unique. Yet it is perhaps only after Death has garnered some great personality into the Void that we can appraise it at its true worth, the wheat severed from the chaff, the grandeur of the soul emerged from the trivialities of mood and manner which have obscured it. Thus to-day one thinks of those two with gratitude for what they did and a wistful merriment for what they were.

Some of the anecdotes respecting them which recur to me, trivial or homely in essence, are yet so typical as to seem an essential part of the atmosphere which enveloped them.

As Lady Stanley has pointed out, my sister was wholly indifferent to dress, and her attempts at personal adornment were perhaps less successful than when she left it alone. Her husband, however, used to urge her to wear pretty colours, and one day, to please him, with some misgivings, she purchased a grass-green coat. "What do you think of it?" she queried anxiously. "Well," he commented thoughtfully, "I complained that you dressed like my housekeeper. Now you are dressed like my grass-widow."

Sir William Richmond once proffered some rejected advice to her in regard to wearing apparel. Calling at Beaver Lodge on a hot summer day, Evelyn found him lounging luxuriously in his beautiful garden clad in strange nether-garments rather like the pantaloons of a clown, which he assured her were a special patent invented and constructed by Lady Richmond. An elastic round the waist and an elastic round each ankle constituted their sole attempt at cut or fit, and their comfort, for male or female, he proclaimed to be indescribable!

As may be imagined, both De Morgan and his wife carried their natural kindliness and generosity to a fault where their servants were concerned, and, as a consequence, in certain cases they met with domestic disaster.

Mrs. Watts told me how she once met them at the National Gallery. A third person stood awkwardly aside with an air of supreme boredom, waiting till her conversation with them was finished; and Evelyn explained the situation naïvely: "That is our cook . . . we have brought her here because, you see"—with a note of awe—"it is such a great thing to keep servants in a good temper!" What result Art was expected to have on culinary capacity was not explained.

When they were changing from their old home in the Vale to Church Street, they brought over from Italy for the summer their Italian chef and his *cara sposa.* On their arrival, however, the new house was not ready for habitation, so Raffaello and Lucia were housed at an hotel where, since Italian servants are usually provided with Chianti, my sister gave them claret and every luxury, while they spent their days sight-seeing at her expense. After they were installed in the new home in Church Street, for some

months all went well, but before the time arrived for the annual migration of the De Morgans to Italy the two Italians became curiously restive and sulky, and finally announced that they must return to Florence *subito*. Vainly was it represented to them that the Signor and the Signora were themselves shortly returning, and that it was behaving badly to leave them thus in the lurch, nothing would satisfy the pair but they must leave at once, Raffaello darkly hinting that his wife had been affronted and he personally was powerless to soothe her. So my sister sadly paid the fare of the inconsiderate couple the whole way back to Italy ; and it was not till afterwards that she discovered the true motive of their abrupt departure.

First, before the journey, Raffaello went to Harrods where, since he was well known from having done the daily shopping, he could order what he wished without creating suspicion. There he laid in a supply of every possible luxury for the journey of himself and his wife—cooked fowl, quails, champagne, grapes etc. ; and booked them all to my sister.

Secondly, he and his wife on arriving in Florence went straight to my sister's flat where the *portiere* admitted them likewise without suspicion, fancying they had been sent on in advance to get the flat ready for the Signora. There they lived like fighting cocks for several weeks, everything which they ate or drank being again entered to my sister.

Thirdly, it was discovered that before leaving London they had appropriated all my sister's best jewellery !

So it is safe to conclude that Raffaello and his wife enjoyed their jaunt to England !

A servant whom my sister subsequently engaged was a curious wan-looking creature ; and De Morgan one day in his quaint, slow drawl announced his conclusion respecting her. " I think she is a ma-terial-i-zation ! " he said. This was almost as descriptive as his reply when he was asked if he liked bananas—" No—o " thoughtfully—" they always make me feel I am eating flannel under-garments ! "

At a later date, my sister had as one of her servants an octogenarian, Mrs. Allen, who was the most perfect type of picturesque old age I have seen. She was very active and declared she could carry trays upstairs backwards quicker than the young ones could carry them forwards. One day she said to me. " If you ever come across a copy of Cranford I should so like to have it," and on my asking why she was specially interested in that book, she replied, " Well, you see, *I* am Miss Matty ! " And suddenly I saw before me Miss Matty's charming old face, with the two caps perched upon it when she unconsciously popped the cap for visitors over the cap for private wear ! Apparently Mrs. Allen had sat to Hugh Thompson for the illustrations to the book ; yet she was

a taller and more stately Miss Matty than he depicted and seemed to me to combine the traits of Miss Deborah and her sister.

My sister was passionately devoted to animals, and anxious to have some household pet, but her attempts at achieving this result were a singular failure. She first annexed a curious specimen of the canine breed which she named Thomas à Kempis De Morgan, and over whose prospective beauty she rejoiced. "What is it supposed to be?" I asked tactlessly, surveying the strange quadruped. "If I have a dog at all," she responded loftily, "I like a thing the size of a donkey. This will be a magnificent Newfoundland." But, alas, as the months passed, Thomas grew in girth but never in height, till he presented a truly amazing appearance, squat, shapeless, with the straggling stump of an ever-waggling tail, and a black-and-white curly coat which conveyed a faint, ridiculous suggestion of there having been a Newfoundland somewhere in his remote mongrel ancestry. Nor was her attempt at keeping a feline pet more successful.

Once when she and her husband were on the verge of starting for Italy they were induced to purchase a fine kitten, an extremely beautiful little animal with large, lovely eyes. Unable, of course, to take it with them, they left many anxious instructions with their servants to look well after the pet and to feed it amply. During their absence accounts came from time to time of the progress of the kitten, and each report emphasized how it was growing fast, and what a wonderful appetite it had. The letters even sounded worried at the greed of the creature, and they laughed at the servants' exaggeration: "We don't know what to do with Kitty —it never seems to have enough to eat, give it what we will; but it's getting a very fine cat." At length the absentees returned from abroad; and when the door of their house opened, out there stalked to greet them a fine puma, bulky with the food with which the servants had been diligently plying it. "Well, ma'am," was the only comment of the latter, when the beast was finally removed to the Zoo, "the milkman he did say he was sure it wasn't no cat, but the young of the lion!"

One other strange pet may be mentioned, as it affords a curious instance of affection in a creature usually supposed to be devoid of intelligence.

When Evelyn was painting "The Spear of Ithuriel," illustrative of a passage in Paradise Lost where Satan is "squat like a toad" at the ear of Eve, she sent for a toad, which arrived by post in a box from the country. Shortly afterwards, to her great annoyance, she discovered that a small boy who was sitting to her for a cherub's head was in uncherubic fashion pinching the unfortunate animal, which she promptly rescued; and the toad seemed to understand and appreciate her intervention. Subsequently, whenever she approached he blinked at her with an affectionate gaze

[*Evelyn De Morgan pinxit.*

LUNA.

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,
And ever changing like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

—*Shelley.*

and hopped towards her ; so that after he had played his part as a model, he remained on as a friend, living in the garden, but with this strange habit, that at intervals he visited the house in obvious anxiety to ascertain if she were still where he had been used to find her. Periodically he would be found seated on the doorstep, waiting patiently till he could enter ; and my sister who, when painting, refused to be interrupted by the most important visitors, gave orders that the toad was always to be admitted. So, in the midst of her work, there would come a knock at the door with the information " Please, ma'am, the toad has called ! " and next the creature would hop into the room, look up in her face, and, after a while, hop out again, satisfied. This continued for some years, when the toad apparently paid the debt of nature, for it came no more.

In a lovely, pathetic little picture, " Luna," Evelyn once depicted a female form drifting in a crescent moon over a blue vista of sleeping earth. A sense of profound weariness and solitude is conveyed by the pale, graceful figure, the cords loosely encircling her are suggestive of captivity, and the whole aptly illustrates Shelley's lines which were transcribed under it.

My mother had just purchased this picture, when one day Lord Salisbury called, and I drew his attention to it with the remark : " Do come and look at my sister's picture ! " He stood for a few moments staring at the scantily-draped figure while, to my mortification, not even a civil platitude respecting it disguised his obvious disapproval. At last he turned to me :

" What made her be painted like that ? "

" Oh," I exclaimed, with dawning comprehension, " don't you understand—my sister is an *artist* ! "

" But—even so—" he observed. . . he shrugged his shoulders as though speech failed him in regard to the immodesty of artists, and before I could elucidate the situation he was gone, under the conviction that he had been gazing at a portrait of my sister taken in fancy-undress !

Dim as are my earlier recollections of Evelyn, owing to the disparity of years between us, one characteristic on which I have previously touched I know was hers from the cradle to the grave —an impatience of delay, of any squandering of the precious moments of life, a desire to fill to the brim every instant of existence with acquirement or achievement, an almost tormenting appreciation of the value of fleeting Time. " Why stitch a thing when it can be gummed ! " she had cried in the nursery when urged to sew ; and once in her girlhood when bitten by a mania for trimming hats, every confection which she ingeniously evolved out of old baskets, cardboard, or plaited straw was stuck together by glue or tin-tacks with a lightning rapidity of invention and construction. Only in regard to Art she was laborious, painstaking. Time had no place in contact with the Eternities. *The Utmost for the Highest.*

CHAPTER XIII

Tales of Relations and Others

I

MY sister had been married fifteen years before I became engaged; and in connection with this event I must remark that the old saw that "history repeats itself," is far more true than any are aware save those who, like myself, are fond of browsing among old papers and comparing the romances, friendships and tragedies of a past day with those of the present. The popular play *Milestones* merely emphasized a fact which I have found repeatedly confirmed—that affinities and antipathies are reproduced between the descendants of those who have been congenial or antagonistic in some long dead past—and this, moreover, between persons to whom the knowledge of that previous history is a sealed letter.

To give one instance—over a century ago my great-grandfather "Coke of Norfolk" and Francis, Duke of Bedford joined forces in experimental agriculture and inaugurated the famous Sheep-shearings at Holkham and at Woburn which became of international fame. Three generations later, my eldest brother and the present Duke likewise amalgamated in experimental fruit-farming and other problems connected with husbandry, the results of their conclusions being published at intervals and proving of world-wide utility. Yet, since young men pay but scanty attention to ancient family history, when they originally drifted into that philanthropic endeavour, I believe that neither had any knowledge that they were but repeating a friendship and a labour which had united their respective forbears over a century before.

In somewhat similar fashion it befell that one day at a party something was said about my descent from the old Saxon family of Pulleine, and a man who was present remarked with interest—"Are you descended from the Pulleines? So am I!" Later he brought some old family papers to endorse this statement; and to our surprise we discovered that not only had we numberless ancestors in common, but we unearthed the curious fact that my great-grandmother had jilted his great-great uncle! By and by when I married that man I pointed out to him that I seemed destined to pay the penalty of my great-grandmother's unscrupulous behaviour!

My husband in his collateral ancestry numbers two ill-fated

Annes—Anne Askew and Anne Boleyn ; and still in his family are a pair of gloves embroidered in red thread which belonged to Queen Elizabeth and which she gave to her first cousin Lord Hunsdon, son of Mary Boleyn by her marriage with Francis Cary. In the vestry of the church adjacent to Hunsdon House hangs a curious old print said by some authorities to depict a visit paid by Elizabeth to her cousin in 1571 ; the Queen is borne aloft by her gentlemen on a raised platform held by four poles, while the ladies of her suite, with compressed bodices and inflated skirts, follow on foot.

Two members of my husband's family in modern times deserve special mention, if only for their good looks and the patriarchal age they attained with their faculties unimpaired—my father-in-law and his brother Bishop Stirling. Both were men of exceptionally handsome appearance, of great charm of manner and of courteous, witty speech. My father-in-law died within a few days of attaining his ninety-fourth year ; his brother, the last survivor of a family of thirteen, within a few weeks of completing his ninety-fifth year.

In regard to the former, so keen was his memory to the last that every day in the year to him was the anniversary of some far-off event which to his listeners seemed to have faded into the realms of history. His stories, told in old-world phraseology, had a fascination all their own, and a few of them may interest the general reader. One day, for instance, having presented us with a couple of swords, he told me the following tale respecting them :—

" My father, Captain Thomas Stirling entered the navy as a Midshipman in 1809, and served in the Walcheren Expedition in the Netherlands. In 1812 he was serving on board the *Impérieuse* under Captain Sir Henry Duncan, son of the famous Admiral Duncan who won the battle of Camperdown over the Dutch in 1779.

" The *Impérieuse* was one of a small number of ships called the ' Flying Squadron ' under the command of Captain, afterwards Admiral Sir Charles Napier of the *Euryalus* which he called ' Pride of the Ocean.'

" In 1813 the Flying Squadron made diversions on the coast of Italy in the Bay of Naples and elsewhere : for at that time Napoleon's brother-in-law Murat was King of Naples, which was occupied by the French : and sometimes when the French soldiers came down in hundreds to bathe, the Flying Squadron would come and drop a shot or two amongst them by way of enlivening them !

" In December, 1813, when in the Bay of Naples, my father received orders to land, having under his command a few Royal Marines and sailors from the *Impérieuse* and *Euryalus* and also a few Italian soldiers who had served in the campaign in Russia against Napoleon. But the French spied them landing and with a body of dragoons and some infantry unexpectedly charged down upon them over a ploughed field. At the first volley from the enemy, the thirty sailors who were dragging the two British guns

were all struck, yet not one of them was seriously hurt! None the less, although the danger was imminent, my father was advised by an old soldier not to fire until the enemy were close up to them; and when at last he did give the order it was with the most destructive effect, as the whole of the front row of the French cavalry fell. So close, however, had they first been allowed to come that the French dragoon immediately in front of my father had his horse shot under him, and the beast, seventeen hands high, fell forward with a crash, so that his mouth came with violence upon my father's right instep, which it broke.

"The dragoon, prostrate upon the ground, was on the point of being bayoneted by the Italians when my father interfered and saved his life; whereupon the Frenchman surrendered his sword to the gallant young midshipman; and that is why to-day in the possession of the latter's grandson there hang side by side the sword of a French dragoon and the sword of a British naval officer!

"The danger of that skirmish, however, rapidly increased, for the French received reinforcements; and my father, with drawn sword, headed his men in their rush for the shore, the sailors dragging their guns. The fugitives had to pass through the narrow street of a little town which sloped abruptly to the beach and most of the windows of which were occupied by French soldiers who kept up a galling fire; yet again, although many of the British and Italians had their coats riddled with bullets, none of them were killed. The Captain of the Marines, nevertheless, was wounded in the knee, and had to be assisted onward by his men, while young Stirling, notwithstanding his broken instep, still bravely ran on in front waving his sword and encouraging those under his command. Suddenly, as he paused to allow the latter to come up to him, glancing at a window above he saw a French soldier in the act of aiming at him with a musket. A slight ledge of brickwork hard by afforded a little shelter. He sprang aside, and squeezed himself against the wall just as the Frenchman fired. The bullet struck the projection, and, its force spent, hit him harmlessly on the shoulder and rolled into the mud at his feet. He picked it up, and having scored a point in this game of Life and Death, he held the flattened bit of lead triumphantly aloft to the French officer, whereupon both antagonists burst out laughing. By and by, my father succeeded in regaining his ship safely and still carrying two trophies—the bullet which had nearly killed him, and the French officer's sword which is now in the possession of his grandson!

"My father suffered all his life from the injury to his ankle which he had sustained in so curious a fashion."

In 1815 this same Thomas—later Captain—Stirling was on board the *Glasgow* cruising about in the English Channel to ensure that Napoleon did not escape to America; and next he was ordered

to guard Napoleon on board the *Bellerophon*. He used to relate that every time he passed the cabin where Bonaparte was confined, he saluted and the boat's crew lowered their oars. Napoleon punctiliously returned the salute. He stood at the window with folded arms, gazing out curiously at the shores of England, which he had hitherto never seen save in imagination. Meanwhile the water swarmed with boats full of people still more curious to see the Man of Destiny; and rumours of a plot to rescue him were so persistently reported that Admiral Lord Keith, then First Lord of the Admiralty, came down to inspect the arrangements for guarding the dangerous captive.

As an instance of the excited condition of the populace at that date it may be mentioned that when Captain Stirling went on shore at Plymouth he was mistaken for Napoleon and pursued with such animosity that he was forced to take refuge in a place of safety, while on another occasion he was mistaken for the Duke of Wellington and pestered with an enthusiasm almost as inconvenient. On peace being proclaimed, however, he retired from the Navy; and shortly afterwards, in 1818, he ascended Helvellyn with Lord Macaulay. In 1825, when thirty-two years of age, he and his brother went on a walking tour from Scotland through England. Arrived at Dartmouth, where their relations had considerable property, they met two pretty girls, sisters of the well-known Admiral Hockin, and the two brothers married these two sisters.

Another story which my father-in-law told me relating to the long past period of Waterloo was as follows:—

"In June, 1815, there happened to be in Brussels a little man who was agent for some Birmingham firm, selling buttons and similar small articles of haberdashery.

"This man became so excited when he heard that Wellington had marched to Waterloo that he determined, if possible, to see the forthcoming battle. So he hired a pony, dressed himself in an old uniform, devoutly hoping he would pass as an officer, and galloped out twelve miles to Waterloo. There he encountered two regiments of our infantry in reserve, who had orders to let no man pass who was beneath the rank of a Colonel. However, he contrived to interest the men in his story, and by and by up came one or two officers who likewise became impressed with his pluck, and anxious, possibly as a jest, to further his project. His feathers, however, were not calculated to deceive anyone, so one of them deputed some of his men to go into the fighting line and see if they could discover a dead Colonel! in which case they were to bring the deceased officer's plumes in order to equip their new friend. This was actually done, and the little commercial traveller, bereft of his own doubtful headgear and adorned with that of the dead officer, rode proudly forward into the danger zone, those who watched him depart

doubtless expecting that he would soon become alarmed and return more quickly than he went.

"Now the little man while residing in Brussels had become acquainted by sight with the great Duke, and what was his astonishment as he trotted forward to espy his hero standing all alone. The Duke had sent off his staff in various directions, and was at that moment most anxious to send further important orders to a General in a distant part of the field, so that on seeing our friend he summoned him eagerly and at once strove to identify him. The little man honestly explained matters to the Duke, who thereupon eyed him piercingly up and down, and then remarked 'Well, since you are masquerading as a Colonel, are you willing to serve your country?' 'It would be the proudest day of my life!' replied the commercial traveller promptly.

"The Duke next felt for a scrap of paper, but found to his dismay that he had used up every available fragment in sending previous messages. He consequently looked yet more keenly at the man from Birmingham and inquired 'Can you be trusted to convey verbal orders *exactly*?' The man replied that he could; and the Duke without further delay gave him, *viva voce*, very important instructions to be conveyed to the distant General. 'And now,' concluded the Duke, 'attend very carefully to what I say. You will first come upon some regiments of Infantry; then the Scots Greys, then some Artillery, and then you will find the General in question. But keep in the background. Do not ride in the front, or you will certainly be shot!'

"Off trotted the little commercial traveller, successfully avoided the bullets of the enemy, found the officer indicated, and delivered his message punctiliously. He then trotted gaily back to the Duke; and as he approached, he witnessed a strange sight. By then the Duke's staff had returned, and the Duke, worn out, dismounted from his horse, laid down on the ground and fell asleep. He slept for five minutes only; then awoke; and apparently greatly refreshed by that badly-needed rest, remounted his horse, and resumed command.

"It may be added that the Duke did not in after years lose sight of the man who had rendered him such an important service, but aided the plucky little commercial traveller to procure some good appointment."

While on the subject of the Duke of Wellington I may append two other anecdotes respecting him which are not generally known.

A friend of his, whilst breakfasting with him at Apsley House, observed that the Duke laughed on perusing a letter, and afterwards set it carefully aside. Later the Duke explained that the letter

in question came from a lady who was totally unknown to him, but who wrote soliciting a great favour from him. She kept a boarding school in Kensington ; and she begged the Duke to send her some non-commissioned officer whose character stood high in his esteem, to teach her young ladies to walk. This strange application very much amused the Duke ; and always prompt, during his morning ride he called at the United Service Club and desired one of the servants to send without fail Sergeant Murphy of the Grenadier Guards to attend the next day in full uniform at the Academy in question, and to inform the head mistress that the Duke of Wellington had sent him to teach her young ladies how to walk !

The Duke, although he liked to follow the hounds, had very little idea of riding, and not only was his seat unsightly, but few men got more falls than he. He maintained that in choosing his aides-de-camp he always preferred fox-hunters, because " they knew how to ride straight to a given point, generally had good horses, and were equally willing to charge a fence or an enemy." The Duke, however, when out shooting was as alert in a field of pheasants as on the field of battle. One day finding his sleeve riddled and his arm smarting from a chance shot discharged by a careless neighbour, he observed that a pheasant fell at the same moment. " Who killed that pheasant ? Hold up your hand ! " commanded the Duke instantly. A hand was unsuspectingly held up *and the Duke fired at it.*

My father-in-law often heard from Lady Sophia Cecil's own lips the story of her father's famous ball on the eve of the battle of Waterloo. Being too young to be present at it, she scrambled out of bed, and peering over the banisters in her nightgown, watched all the guests arrive, so many of whom within a few hours were lying stark and dead on the battlefield.

He also told me some interesting stories of old Lord Meath, but perhaps none as curious as that which the present Lord Meath, founder of Empire Day, personally related to my husband when the latter was staying at his shooting-box, Rathdrum. Coming home from hunting when dusk he said his father's horse fell over the edge into a gravel pit, but it " looped the loop " with singular success. Turning a complete somersault in the air, it alighted on its feet *with the old Earl still in the saddle !*

When my father-in-law was *in extremis* his mind remained clear and his habitual sense of humour did not forsake him. Once when the nurses were trying to turn him in bed and thereby causing him great suffering, my husband entered the room, and the old man, trying to stifle his groans, observed with pitiful gaiety : " Will you kindly see that these people are hanged for tormenting your father so ! "

" I think hanging is too good for them ! " responded my husband in the same vein.

"Yes; but one must draw the line somewhere!" rejoined the old man, still prompt in repartee, although in mortal agony and within a few hours of death.

"I will show you some sign after I am gone which will not frighten you!" he said, towards the end. I cannot account for the popular superstition in regard to the erratic behaviour of clocks under special circumstances; yet when we returned from the funeral my husband remarked the strange coincidence that a clock which his father had given him, and which had gone uninterruptedly for forty years, had stopped at the precise moment when the hearse had entered the cemetery!

* * * *

Charles Stirling.
Born 1827, ob. 1921.

Of Bishop Stirling, about fourteen months junior to his brother, it is no exaggeration to say that he was one of the most remarkable men of his generation, and the story of his life, if adequately written, would form a strange and enthralling romance.

In 1862, having been told that he had tuberculosis and had only a couple of years to live, he determined to make the utmost of the brief remainder of existence left to him, and throwing up all other work, he journeyed out to South America bent on labouring there amongst the most notorious and degraded savages explorers had ever seen. Charles Darwin after his famous voyage in the *Beagle* spoke of the natives of Tierra del Fuego as probably the very lowest of the human race, the nearest approach to the missing link which had been discovered; a people whom he considered it impossible to humanize.

All previous attempts in this connection had failed tragically. In 1851 the heroic Captain Allen Gardiner with a party of six companions had organized an expedition with this object in view, but all had perished miserably from slow starvation on the barren coast. In 1859 another band of pioneers had been brutally massacred by the natives, and so great was the terror which these savages inspired that the crews of ships wrecked near that coast were wont to put an end to their lives rather than escape to such a shore.

At first Mr. Stirling made the Falkland Islands the base of his operations; but after his wife's death, all alone to Ushuaia, the southernmost inhabited region of the globe, the brave man went. What he endured in that solitude no one but himself will ever know.

Heroically he pitted his waning strength against the giant forces of Nature in their most relentless and cruel aspect. A thousand times he faced a horrible death;—death and torture from pitiless savages; death from starvation; at best, it was believed, death from a lingering disease, far from civilization, unattended by any friendly hand, uneased by even the commonest necessaries of life. He, regarded as a dying man, voluntarily lived alone in a comfortless hut, among men worse than wild beasts; he journeyed over a trackless country in a canoe on wheels, sometimes for weeks together he only kept starvation at bay by hunting for seaweed upon the shore; sometimes up to his waist in snow he subsisted on roots discovered and unearthed with difficulty. And as he paced up and down before his lonely dwelling in that terrible isolation, he wrote: "I fancy myself God's sentinel stationed at the southernmost outpost of His great army."

"If ever a man deserved the Victoria Cross that man was Bishop Stirling," wrote Vice-Admiral Sir William Kennedy years after, "for he carried his life in his hands, and the chances were all against his ever returning to civilization." He never would speak of his incessant hairbreadth escapes; only one typical incident has become known. As he was meditating in a wood one day, a native, armed with a tomahawk glided up to kill him. Ready to meet death, he rose calmly and looked his intending murderer unflinchingly in the face. To the dull intelligence of the savage there penetrated some dim realization of the grandeur of that forceful personality which he was about to destroy. The tomahawk was lowered, the creature slunk awe-stricken away; and some years afterwards he was baptized by the man he had intended to butcher.

Once in England, pulling an old watch out of his pocket, the Bishop observed affectionately, "That is the watch with which I used to circumnavigate Cape Horn." He was a splendid seaman, and used to sail in the *Allen Gardiner* yacht, of light tonnage, without a chronometer. Constantly he encountered storms which it seemed impossible that the little craft could survive. Once he saw coming towards him one of the abnormal waves which occasionally occur during a hurricane, and which engulf any helpless vessel they encounter. On it came, the great wall of water, and he knew that if it did not break within the next few seconds death was inevitable. Higher and higher it towered, then, just as destruction seemed upon him, the great glittering mountain curved, tottered, and crashed, sweeping downwards in a foaming torrent which rocked his ship like a cockleshell on its breast.

Meanwhile the very hardships which he endured were unexpectedly his salvation. The treatment for tuberculosis in those days consisted in the exclusion of fresh air, and the enervating

regimen of an invalid. Instead, a life of reckless hardihood, of constant exposure speedily made the doomed man robust and strong. In laying down his life he had found it.

In like manner, his dauntless courage, his unswerving determination, worked a transformation as little anticipated in the savage hordes around him. First they learnt to respect the fearless stranger, then to love him ; and that novel element of love worked a miracle. Not many months after Mr. Stirling had come to live among them, an American ship was wrecked upon the coast, and the sailors expecting a cruel death at the hands of the natives were astonished to find themselves treated with kindness. By and by, when Mr. Stirling visited England he took with him four youths from Tierra del Fuego and showed them to Charles Darwin, who expressed his amazement at the result. With characteristic honesty Darwin confessed that he had been wrong in supposing that the Fuegians represented material which could not be humanized ; whereupon he promptly sent a donation to the South American Missionary Society and became an annual subscriber to its orphanage ! Shortly before his death he again expressed his astonishment at what had been achieved. " I certainly should have predicted," he wrote to a friend, " that not all the men in the world could have accomplished what has been done."

In 1869 Mr. Stirling was sent for to England and consecrated as first Bishop of the Falkland Islands. The title was singularly misleading ; for he was, in fact, the Bishop of all South America, except British Guiana. His diocese was the largest in the world. To cross it—supposing the primeval forests could have been crossed —would have represented a distance of 3,000 miles ; but to skirt it afloat meant a journey of 10,000 miles. Its variations of climate included torrid heat and icy cold. Cannibals and scattered white colonists were alike under his care, together with a race of clergy perhaps little used to episcopal jurisdiction. Not the least of his difficulties might have been presented by the Jesuits, themselves the pioneers of earlier days, who had bitterly opposed the various efforts of Captain Gardiner to reach the natives ; but we are told " the Bishop's gentle courtesy quickly won their goodwill, and among few things he would willingly tell of his own wonderful past was the unexpected honour and kindness which he met with at their hands as he travelled on his distant tours " ; not the least remarkable incident being that in days when religious antagonism ran high, on his wife's death she had been borne to her grave solely by Roman Catholics, who volunteered this especial token of respect and sympathy.

Only a man of rare mentality could have coped with the varied difficulties of his situation ; only a man of unfailing courage could have faced the ceaseless toil, the complex problems, the incessant dangers which he had to encounter as he journeyed assiduously

from one part of his vast diocese to another. And with it all, perhaps, the most remarkable part of his personality was his unruffled calm, his impressive dignity, his old-world grace of manner; and the fact that whatever hardships he endured, he remained dainty almost to fastidiousness in his person, so that to the last it was difficult to imagine that he had passed his life otherwise than in an episcopal Palace amid smooth and luxurious surroundings, or that beneath that calm, gracious exterior was the force of an iron will and a Spartan temperament.

When the present King was touring with his brother on board the *Bacchante*, an entry in his diary records his meeting with Bishop Stirling: "We expected to find savages, and we found a courtier"; and a courtier to high and low he ever remained. Recently the Dean of Wells wrote of him:—

"He was a winner of hearts wherever he might be; . . . his quiet self-effacing goodness made him universally beloved. The tall, stately presence, the noble head with its silvery hair, the courtly manner, the almost excessive modesty and self-restraint, gave an attractiveness which was quite unique; while the firm lips and the rare flashes of momentary indignation revealed the natural force engendered by years of lonely discipline. He never lost his broad-minded sympathy. He watched new movements with no apparent anxiety, and readily acquiesced in changes which he would not himself have made. . . . The heroism of his work will, we hope, be told in its fullness, now that the bar which he placed on its recital has been removed."

When no longer able to sustain the strenuous episcopal duties to which he had been accustomed, he returned to England and became Assistant Bishop of Bath and Wells, Canon Residentiary and Precentor, so that he was responsible for the beautiful music in Wells Cathedral, and was in residence in an old Elizabethan house in East Liberty for part of each year. In 1919 he celebrated his Jubilee as a Bishop, a unique event in the Anglican Church, which younger Bishops and many noted men of the day assembled in London to honour.

Throughout his life the Bishop shared his brother's gift of wit, and many instances of his unfailing sense of humour were retailed. One day during a heavy storm at sea, a lady exclaimed desperately: "I believe it is all because we have a Bishop on board. They're regular Jonahs!" Suddenly she felt a pat on her shoulder—"Quite right, quite right, my dear lady!" acquiesced the Bishop, "I have noticed wherever I go there is always a hurricane!" Sir William Kennedy used to relate how out shooting in America one morning an evil-smelling skunk squirted its offensive fluid in the face of one of his dogs, and wrathfully he exclaimed: "Nothing will ever make me believe that Noah took such a stinking beast into the Ark!" "Well, no!" responded the Bishop with a twinkle, in his eye, "I admit that it is unlikely."

As a nonagenarian, anecdotes were rife concerning his amazing agility of mind and body. Once as he was crossing the road in

Kensington Gore, a motor, carelessly driven, knocked him down and apparently dragged him. If such an event happened to one of this generation, the victim would be heard of no more. Not so the Bishop. Sound in wind and limb, he reappeared from beneath the car, and began quietly removing the dust from his clothes. Meanwhile a policeman rushed up to him, exclaiming in horrified accents: "Oh, my Lord, I hope you are not seriously hurt?" "Well, no," responded the old man with an amused smile, "I always was pretty tough!" He refused to prosecute the chauffeur, and walked back a couple of miles to his house in Holland Park; then, fearing some damage had been done to his teeth, he set off again to visit his dentist and walked briskly another couple of miles there and back!

When he heard that his elder brother was seriously ill, he journeyed in haste from London to Somersetshire, and was intensely surprised on his arrival to find that he was not allowed to sit up with the invalid all night. Few sights were perhaps more touching than to see the two splendid old men—the brother then aged ninety-three ministering to the brother of ninety-four. "Charles," said the Bishop tenderly as he held his brother's hand, "we shall soon join the heavenly brotherhood, you and I!" A little over two years later he too passed away with his wit and charm undiminished, still nimble almost as a youth in body, a singularly picturesque personality to the last moment of his life—a rare combination of extreme physical beauty, strength, gentleness and an iron determination. For three days subsequently he lay in state in his scarlet robes with the episcopal ring upon his finger, an equally rare image of exquisite old age; then he was buried at Wells Cathedral beside Lord Arthur Hervey, who had been consecrated a Bishop in Westminster Abbey the same day as himself, but who had died over thirty years previously. Few who were present at the ceremony amid such surroundings would ever forget that closing scene of a remarkable life.

"Nothing but the majesty of Gothic," wrote an eye-witness, "was worthy to be the shrine of such a man. The whole rite was one of haunting beauty. . . . The lying of the coffin under the purple pall in the lovely 'Decorated' Lady Chapel built by Bishop Drokensford; the winding of the apparently endless, picturesque procession along that Ambulatory whose pavement was trodden for centuries by the feet of countless Abbots, monks and Bishops in the solemn services; the piercing pathos of those exquisite voices echoing among arches and vaulting which for seven hundred years have reverberated morning and evening in unbroken sequence with choral harmonies; the service in the choir of Bishop Ralph (1250) when the boys sang as if inspired; by and by the scene beside the grave with the golden sunlight of a windless November afternoon mellowing those grey, venerable walls and lighting up

[*From a photograph.*

THE RT. REV. WAITE HOCKIN STIRLING, D.D.
Bishop of the Falkland Islands,
Assistant Bishop to the Bishop of Bath and Wells,
Canon and Precentor of Wells Cathedral.
Born 1829; *ob.* 1923.

the white-robed choristers and the clergy in their many-coloured hoods; the mass of sweet-smelling flowers; the aged Dean beside the open grave struggling with emotion; the Bishop with his crozier giving the last Benediction. . . .

"Then an unbroken silence . . . and next the clear voices of the boys again ringing out in song as the long procession wound slowly away through the cloisters, still singing, singing as they went, their voices growing fainter and fainter 'like horns from elfland faintly blowing' till they died away in the Cathedral itself. . . . It was a poem which recalled, for a space, the beauty, the romance and the magic of the Middle Ages.

"I like to think of him lying there in his stately robes in the stillness, broken only by the splash of that perennial fountain, with the bells of the high towers above him chiming his requiem eternally through the centuries.

"In the great Cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him."

Meanwhile, such had been the Bishop's modesty, and such his inveterate dislike to any mention of what he had accomplished that, of this man who had survived an existence of enthralling adventure such as falls to the lot of few, who had dared, endured and achieved triumphantly, a colourless Obituary notice spoke confidently of his "quiet, uneventful life!"

II

It is generally recognized that the Celtic temperament tends to invite the uncanny. There is something in the very air of Scotland which seems to breathe the spirit of Mediævalism, of poetry and romance; while mysticism remains inherent in the race which is bred there. Possibly the explanation may be found in the fact that beings who live in closer touch with Nature retain certain faculties and perceptions which become blunted by long contact with a more materialistic existence. Man in an uncivilized condition possesses powers of sight and hearing which read like a fairy-tale to the denizens of civilized climes; animals, besides the gift of orientation, have retained senses which we have lost or which have survived only in a comparatively feeble and atrophied form. And it seems as though the Scottish race, with forbears who lived for generations amid the lonely grandeur of their mountain fastnesses and native wilds, have preserved certain temperamental faculties long since become latent in those who can claim no such dominant heritage. Whether we term it superstition or romanticism, whether we speak of second-sight or clairvoyance or any one of the names employed to define the indefinable, there is no Scot so canny that the uncanny does not form a strong though apparently incongruous heritage derived from his shrewd, hard-headed ancestors.

When I found that I was marrying a Scotsman I decided that we would defy superstition. The wedding took place on a Friday in May, and although the Almanac did not unfortunately permit of its being likewise on the thirteenth of the month, my husband, further to flout Fate, wore an opal pin on the occasion, and we started housekeeping with a full-sized stuffed peacock in our home. Nor did we find the augury unpropitious when yachting shortly afterwards we visited a music hall at the seaside, and were treated to the following disconcerting ditty :

Love makes you sing all day ;
Marriage makes you work all day ;
Divorce makes you cry *Hurray* !
Love, Marriage and Divorce !

" Hurrah for a short wife but a merry one ! " commented my husband reassuringly.

None the less, the uncanny pursues him as persistently as it evades me ; and I cannot resist telling an absurd incident which occurred to him shortly after we married.

I own a curious stick which was sent to my mother half-a-century ago as a present from Jamaica. She was told by the sender that it had belonged to a witch-doctor, and that at one time the natives considered an implement of this description so valuable a possession that they would commit murder in order to secure one, since by its agency they believed that the Powers of Evil could be utilized or routed as convenience dictated. The stick is made of reddish wood, highly polished. At the top is a hand with long tapering fingers, the outside of which is black, while the inside and the carefully-formed nails are of red wood ; only the thumb, which represents will-power, is absent, indicating that it is a magic stick which the right person can rule. Along the stem are two snakes, one is in red wood with scales, the other black and shiny ; at the base kneels a grotesque little figure with upraised arms.

One day at a party I met a celebrated palmist, Mrs. H., who asked if she might come to see my stick, as she had one somewhat similar which came from India ; the snakes, she assured me, represented Evil, but on *her* stick a thumbless hand was clasping reptiles of white ivory, and once at a séance, she announced, it had spelt out " I hold Evil away from you," which she considered a very beautiful idea. She suggested having a séance with my stick ; and a few days later this took place in my sitting-room in Bryanston Square, but was, as I had anticpated, entirely unconvincing. A large piece of cardboard with the alphabet upon it was hung up, and several people put their hands upon the stick, which was then supposed to dart towards the letters it wished to indicate ; but it obviously never moved unless it was propelled voluntarily by those who held it, and in reply to questions it spelt out the most foolish

answers. An element of amusement was only introduced when it rapped out that it disliked me because I could not " will it," and that it wanted to go back to its former home.

" Where was that ? " I asked.

" In ancient Egypt ! " it spelt ; and although at the time I was unaware of the likeness, it certainly bears a resemblance to the quaint objects which have since been unearthed from the tomb of Tutankhamen.

" What were you used for there ? " I asked.

" For raising the Devil ! "

" I wish it would raise him now ! " I observed longingly, for the proceedings were dull ; but Mrs. H. took the remark quite to heart. " You would not say that ! " she said in a tone of genuine alarm : " if you had seen what *I* have seen ! "

The séance ended, I forgot to put the stick away, but left it propped upright on the seat of a chair which was of a somewhat unusual shape—it had a semi-circular back, upholstered in tapestry, the upper part terminating in a flat rim of polished wood. Later in the evening my husband came in ; and in a few minutes observed that he had left a book in my sitting-room and must fetch it. I suggested he should take a candle, but he refused, remarking : " The moonlight is so bright I can see perfectly ; and I know just where I left it."

He ran downstairs, but after a little space returned without the book, and looking very white. " What is the matter ? " I asked. " I did not wait to look for the book," he said, and then he told me what had happened. " As I expected, the moonlight was brilliant in your room and I could see everything quite clearly. I went straight to the table where I had left my book, but as I was hunting for it I heard a curious knocking coming from the other end of the room. I looked round to find out what could be causing this, and there in the moonlight I saw distinctly *a stick resting on the seat of your tapestry chair, waving backwards and forwards, and hitting the wooden back of the chair as it swung to and fro !* I stared at it astonished for a few moments, doubting the evidence of my senses—then, I admit, I turned and fled ! "

Now my husband not only knew nothing about the séance which had taken place, but he had never even heard that I possessed a witch-doctor's stick. What strange obsession therefore produced on his brain the impression of a stick waving to and fro, and noisily hitting the woodwork of the chair ?

He had in early life another experience which was more unpleasant. He was staying in an old house in Kent which had many historical associations, when one night he woke up suddenly, petrified with cold, and feeling as though an icy wind were passing over him. Looking round to see if the window were wide open, he discovered the apparition of an old woman standing by his

bedside. It had a most horrible face; and for what seemed an eternity, he looked at it and it looked at him. Then it vanished, and he remained awake till the morning in no enviable frame of mind. He had recently been dabbling in Spiritualism, and his one thought was "I have been toying with unknown forces—and this is what I have raised. I will never have anything to do with Spiritualism again"; a resolution to which he subsequently adhered.

Many times he stayed in the same house during the years which followed and had no other adventures. Then he had a disagreeable sequel to his first experience.

The evening previous to this latter occurrence he had passed in cheery fashion playing billiards with some officers till about midnight, when he went up to his room in excellent spirits. Soon afterwards he was attacked with raging toothache—an important factor in what follows, for although he got into bed and tried vainly to rest, the tormenting pain made sleep, and consequently dreaming, impossible.

After some time as he lay there tossing in wretched discomfort, he became aware of a horrible sensation of cold. It seemed to paralyse him, and he grew more and more frigid. Then, although he heard no sound, it seemed as though something was conveying to him the words: "*Here I am again after twenty years! Here I am again after twenty years!*" He was not occupying the room where he had seen the apparition before, and he did not connect the former event with this present experience, as, chilled to the bone, he glanced nervously round, and in a distant corner he saw something like a white mist. He felt convinced that there had been nothing white there when he got into bed, so he sat upright and looked at it intently; then, as he watched, he saw that it was whirling round like a column of dust; next, that it was moving slowly towards him, till, gradually as it advanced, he became aware that it was materializing into the same apparition of a ghostly hag which he had seen twenty years earlier.

"This time," he thought, "I am determined to see the thing through!" He never took his eyes off the whirling whiteness and shouted, "Who is there?" but there was no response and, unable to bear the horror longer, he seized the matches and struck a light. Nothing was to be seen; but he lit the gas and lay awake till the morning.

At breakfast my husband told his host of his experience. "I can quite believe it!" was the reply. "This is what happened to me the other day. I was told that a man had called just at luncheon-time. I hate missing my luncheon, and I was flying downstairs in a temper when, as I was turning the corner of the stairs, I saw a man rushing upstairs. I put out my hand to avoid a collision *and went right through him!*" The narrator, it should be added,

was a clever, hard-headed man, scientific and anything but credulous; nor was he given to seeing visions.

In the instance here quoted, however, the supposed ghostly visitant to my husband was less polite than one said to be located at Ightam Mote. A pleasing tale runs that in that wonderful old house in Kent a guest occupying the haunted priest's room was frightened at night, and reached out his hand to find the matches. And, in the darkness, the *match-box was handed to him.* "*Ghostess oblige*" may yet become the revised version of an old proverb!

Possibly, too, my husband emulated the attitude of George IV when visiting Raynham. The King was asked if he had seen the famous Brown Lady who haunts that place. "Seen her?—certainly I saw her!" he replied emphatically. "But she was too d——d ugly for me to take any notice of her!"

Staying in Scotland, my husband had experiences which seemed to belong to the Middle Ages and to be coeval with the ancient castle where he was visiting. Unfortunately the most curious of these I cannot retail because in many houses a family ghost is almost synonymous with a family skeleton, since the prejudice of both guests and servants to it is an evil which no hostess can minimize. An account of a dream with which he was pestered at least can injure no one.

On several occasions he dreamed that he was lying ill on the bed in the identical room which he was in fact occupying, although some of the surrounding furniture was different. By and by there entered a man who after a few angry words attacked him savagely. They fought and fought, while the dreadful sensation of alternate suffocation from attempted strangling, or the pain of blows, seemed to be horribly real, and above it he could hear the brutal voice of his assailant: "I intend to maim you! I *will* maim you!" till he awoke, perspiring with fright.

At length he told his hostess. "What a strange thing!" she said, "for in the room where you are sleeping one of the former owners lay very ill and his brother came to see him. The brothers quarrelled and fought, and the brother who was well, shouting 'I *will* maim you!' broke the leg of the invalid. The maimed man afterwards died raving mad." Now the natural inference is that my husband had previously heard this tale and had retained the impression in his subconscious mind; but this was not the case, and any vision which he evolved of what had actually happened in the room he was occupying must he accounted for by some other agency.

Another curious incident which occurred to him was at the time of the tragic murder of Mrs. Luard. As will be remembered, she was found shot under mysterious circumstances in a summer-house not far from her home at Sevenoaks. We were staying at Holkham on the day that the news first appeared in the papers, and that same

evening my husband and Lady Mabel Coke were playing with Planchette, when, being at a loss what question to ask the erratic little board, my aunt suggested that they should inquire who had murdered Mrs. Luard.

After a preliminary canter, Planchette scrawled "*Charles, Charles, Charles,*" my husband's name all over the paper. According to precedent, Planchette was scolded for fooling, and the question was again repeated. Planchette raced over the paper as before, and then wrote, "*Edward, Edward, Edward.*" This being the name of one of my cousins present, Planchette was again scolded, and the question was repeated more severely. Thereupon the pencil wrote with the same rapidity—"*General, General, General,*" till it had covered an entire sheet of paper. "It is quite hopeless going on with this nonsense!" was the verdict of the onlookers; "Planchette will only humbug to-night," and the little board was put away.

It was not till some weeks later that insinuations against General Luard first arose, and one day a letter of protest from him appeared in the papers signed by his full Christian names, which till then had been unknown to us—*Charles Edward Luard* (*General*).

Precedent has usually shown that Planchette is peculiarly mendacious, and there seems little doubt that the true murderer of the unfortunate lady was some tramp whose object was robbery. But the curious part of the story is that the diabolical suggestion which was to gain credence against the bereaved husband was foreshadowed in this unexpected fashion at a time when there was not the faintest idea that suspicion would ever be foisted on him, and in a room where not one person present was acquainted with him nor had any knowledge of his Christian names.

III

Mention of Holkham brings to my mind other memories.

Owing to my aunt-ridden girlhood in Yorkshire, I did not visit Norfolk till I was grown up, and on my first sojourn in my grandmother's old home, by a curious chance, unwittingly I was given the room which she had occupied in far-away days, and which I recognized solely by having heard a description of the tapestry with which it had always been hung. As I was gazing sentimentally out of the window whence she must so often have gazed during her girlhood, pretty Jane, my unfailing attendant through life, shared my mood.

"The park," she observed thoughtfully, "covers a radiance of ten miles. And it seems odd to think that her ladyship always loved bombazin." I traced the connection of ideas through their apparent irrelevance—the discrepancy presented by the spaciousness of my grandmother's home and her simplicity of dress; but pretty Jane's sayings still brighten many a drear passage through life. "Your por Grandmamma!" she said reminiscently a moment later,

thinking of the convolvulus-besprinkled muslin dress of many summers ago, "how she did like everything Just So. Simply chronic!"

By and by she left me in quest of the post, and returned after a prolonged absence, discomfited. "I feel flagged out with the distances here!" she said, "and there must be a big house-party staying, for I asked the porter: 'Are there any letters this morning?' and he said—quite short—'Only a matter of five hundred!'"

I tried to explain that the house had had a post-office on the premises from the eighteenth century when a Lord Leicester had been Postmaster General; also that the porter might be gifted with a sense of humour.

That evening I did what every one is bound to do at Holkham—when endeavouring to find my room I lost myself in the amazing labyrinth of underground passages, and wandered fearfully along, wondering why finger-posts had not been provided. The house was not then lit by electric light, and as I strayed onwards by the uncertain gleam of a hand-candle which I dreaded momentarily a draught might extinguish, I thought woefully of a tale my mother had told me about a lady's maid who had lost herself in similar fashion overnight and was found in the morning seated on a cannon weeping bitterly, under the impression that she might not be rescued from that vast solitude ere starvation had done its fell work.

So thinking, at last I saw a glimmering light, and with relief hastened towards it. Peering through the chink in a door I discovered that it came from the sanctum of the hall-porter, by day an impressive person, wearing many medals, but who now looked less imposing, seated in his shirt-sleeves drinking some light refreshment. The sight of any human being was welcome, and I timidly made my presence known. "I am afraid," I observed deprecatingly, "that I am lost. Do you by any chance happen to know which is my room?" Up rose the tall figure. "There's a-many comes here," he observed apathetically, as he seized two tall silver candlesticks, and, holding these aloft, plunged into the gloom of the passage without. Anxiously I sped after him, feeling that if I once lost sight of that flickering light—did it sway unsteadily?—my fate was sealed; but after what seemed to me a long and alarming walk, I arrived safely at my destination.

I then understood where many of my relations had acquired the habit of taking exercise indoors on a wet day. My mother had called it "to *passagiare*," and for an entire afternoon when the weather was bad I have known her pace ceaselessly like a caged lion to and fro along a London passage in the endeavour to procure sufficient exercise. At Holkham it was easy to *passagiare*—one could get "flagged out" by merely trying to find one's room!

For all save the very unimaginative, the people who have lived in a house previously have left something of their personality in

their former environment; and at Holkham, for me, this feeling was intensified. Through family tradition, and through the old letters, I lived with a vanished generation there as once I had lived at Banks, sharing their joys and sorrows so long since stilled—all the trivial round which for them had once constituted Life. The dead were real to me; the living phantasmagoria.

As is well-known, Coke of Norfolk married twice, having had only daughters by his marriage with Jane Dutton, sister of the first Lord Sherborne; and Lady Mary Coke, writing of my luckless great-grandmother, pithily summed up the disaster which diverted the succession: "A mouse got into the lady's nightcap and demolished the heir to Holkham." Owing to her early death, her youngest child, my grandmother, was mistress of the house from the age of five, till Coke's second marriage at the age of sixty-eight to Lady Anne Keppel, his goddaughter, a girl of eighteen. Subsequently, as my mother spent half her childhood at Holkham, she was brought up from nursery days with the children of that second marriage who, although her uncles, were her contemporaries and exactly like her own brothers.

I used to find it curious when looking at my great-uncle, who was also my godfather, to reflect that he was the son of a man who was born in the reign of George II, sixty-six years only after James II had been expelled from the throne of England, and thirty-four before the celebration of the first centenary of that so-called "glorious revolution" of 1688—a father who in his early manhood had danced with the bride of bonny Prince Charlie, had drunk the health of Washington during the War of Independence, and who in his prime was the contemporary of George III, of Louis XVI, of Lafayette, Wellington, Napoleon, and a host of noted dead fast growing hazy down the vista of history. Moreover, that my uncle himself had been born when George IV was on the throne of England, when Napoleon had been dead but a few months, and when the future Queen Victoria was a little girl, not three years old, playing with her toys in the nursery of Kensington Palace!

But foremost among the friendly ghosts of those vanished days remained for me what the old letters termed "the dear, warm-hearted old man" Coke of Norfolk. In life he had an unrivalled capacity for inspiring affection such as falls to the lot of few men; and now through the dead generations he gripped at my heart. By and by I went away and wrote about him. I knew little of him when I started, save the traditions of that former generation from whom I came; but I felt that he was worth all the time and energy which I could devote to my subject as, bit by bit, I pieced the eighty-eight years of his life together. For me it was a mere labour of love; but having published many books since the sea-blue fairy-tale book of my childhood, after a time I sent the result to a publisher, who, in due course, sent for me.

I will not mention the man's name, and he is now dead; but he was tall and pompous, and he had a sonorous voice. He looked at me over his glasses much as "Sir John" had glared at me when I was a mite with my doll, as though I were some curious—possibly some obnoxious—insect.

"Did *you* write this?" he asked like a Judge addressing a criminal; "I thought it was the work of a man."

I apologized.

"Not that I have read it!" he hurried to add, anxious that I should cherish no illusions; "it is much too long."

I looked guiltily at the pile of manuscript over a foot in height.

"For instance, I see that the first six chapters are about ancestry. Now in these days people want to hear about the man himself. If my Life were written, people would want to hear about ME, not my ancestors."

Here I concurred, for my new friend bore a name which did not excite curiosity respecting his ancestors.

"Knock out the first six chapters bodily," he continued affably, "and boil the whole thing down to 100,000 words—and then if you bring it back to me probably I'll look at it."

Then I spoke: "Do you mean," I asked, "that you expect me to do about a year's work mutilating this book—on the chance that you may read it?"

He put his finger-tips together and surveyed me with a faint air of surprise. "That is the idea . . ." he said.

"Do you think it is good enough?" I asked; but he was very busy politely wrapping up the MS. in brown paper. "Come to me again!" he murmured graciously as he showed me out. Going home with the parcel I reflected that perhaps it *was* long—it was so heavy. And when I had laid it on my desk in my room, I noticed there was an excellent fire burning on the hearth, and it struck me that there was the ideal depository for an unwanted MS. At the moment, however, when I reached out my hand with murderous intent, there was a loud flop, and from the skylight above me there fell on to the MS. a spider, the like of which I have never seen in England before or since. So huge were his proportions that he looked like a tarantula; thrice he raced in his hairy ugliness over the MS. and then disappeared on to the floor, and although I summoned Jane promptly to hunt for him we could never trace "whence he came or whither wending"; but Jane drew her own inference from the episode. "And he fell on your book too? What an excellent omium!"

At least the monster had stayed my hand; and soon Coke gripped at my heart again. I did another year's work to the MS. —addition, not subtraction; and when it was published the Press kindly said it was one of the best biographies of the century, moreover that the condemned first six chapters were among the most

interesting in the book. Then one day I met my friend of the sonorous voice.

"I made the great mistake of my life," he said, generously, "when I did not read your manuscript!"

"You made a greater when you left me to carry it home again," I rejoined, remembering how my arms had ached.

Even so short a time ago, a woman's work did not always get an unbiassed verdict; and having previously written under a pseudonym, I still tried to leave the question of my sex indeterminate by not putting my Christian name to any publications. As a result, one evening at a banquet to which Mr. John Lane had invited me, he introduced me to the Editor of an influential paper, who seemed singularly upset at the *rencontre*. "But I thought you were a man!" he exclaimed.

Again I apologized.

"And I gave you articles in my paper two weeks running," he continued tragically, "and I said you were the greatest agriculturist of the day!"

"If it interests you," I explained meekly, "I just know a sheep from a cow—when I have my glasses up."

Shortly afterwards the following appeared in a daily paper:

"First we are informed by the Press that Mrs. Stirling is a man; next that 'we believe Mrs. Stirling to be a lady' (!); thirdly, that Mrs. Stirling, the most urban of the urbane, is 'one of the greatest agriculturists in England.' *Verily great Homer sometimes nods!*"

By and by an interviewer called to see me: "What would you say is your individual recipe for writing a book?" he asked, note-book in hand; and I replied truthfully:

"Put in all you can. Take out all you can. And if you value peace and quiet, burn the lot!"

IV

One incident from the far-away past at Holkham always appealed to me. During the years when England was in hourly terror of an invasion from Napoleon, my Yorkshire great-grandfather, Mr. Stanhope, a vehement Tory, was chiefly instrumental in inaugurating the Volunteer movement for home defence. My Norfolk great-grandfather, Coke, a violent Whig, had the greatest contempt for the amateur troops, whom he termed "boys playing at soldiers." Subsequently, writers of that date attributed the failure of Napoleon to invade our shores primarily to two causes; first, the large army of volunteers which Stanhope had been instrumental in providing for home-defence, and, secondly, that Coke having made England self-supporting, Napoleon could not starve us into submission by stopping imports! Thus my two great-grandparents were, accord-

ing to the Whig or Tory politics of their contemporaries, respectively accredited with having kept the Corsican at bay.

Two characteristic stories of Coke of Norfolk have been told to me, since the publication of my book, by the late Lord Hotham, whose forbear was constantly at Holkham with mine in those bygone days. During a large shooting-party, Coke, who, as is well known, was a magnificent shot, once made a wager with his guests of a pipe of port that he would shoot fifty brace of partridges with his own gun in one day without missing a single bird. He won it; and the losers, not wanting to pay so large a wager, and thinking it impossible that anyone could manage such a feat two days running, offered their host a second pipe the next day if he could repeat his performance, while one of them went out with him "to see fair play." Coke shot 49½ brace of birds without one miss, when his friend, trembling at the thought of that second pipe of port, and wishing to hedge a bit, said: "Look here, Coke, will you risk the last bird, or will you take a hogshead (equal to half a pipe) now, and cry quits?" Coke had no misgiving about his ability to kill the hundredth bird, but not wishing to "rook" his guests, he agreed to take the hogshead and "cry quits." Hardly was this settled than up got a partridge and Coke fired—*and missed*!

One day Coke, who had a very fine cellar, brought out various choice vintages which his guests greatly appreciated. At last he said: "Well, now, gentlemen, here is another wine on which I should like your opinion." The wine was handed round and, one after another, all present were loud in its praise. Last of all, Coke turned to Hotham and said: "Well, what do *you* think of it?" But Hotham had noticed a mischievous twinkle in his host's eye, and he cautiously replied: "Oh, you mustn't ask me —I'm no judge!" "You're the only wise man of the lot!" Coke ejaculated. "It is gooseberry-wine made from fruit grown in my own garden!"

Hotham used also to relate that when Coke of Norfolk was made a Peer one of his small sons was found crying bitterly because, he said, the servants had told him that if his daddy was made a Lord he himself would be called "the horrible!" This has had a counterpart in modern times when a child recently announced that for a school-essay she had got "horrible mention."

Coke in his limitless hospitality opened his doors to visitors from all parts of the world, particularly to American travellers, who were then seldom seen on our shores. In his Life I described, among his earliest guests from that country, the beautiful daughters of Richard Caton: Mary, who became Lady Wellesley, and her sisters who became respectively the Duchess of Leeds and Lady Stafford. The "three American Graces," as they were called, having been seen at Holkham, soon became the rage; and the late Countess Esterhazy, their descendant, has since told me that once when they

were dining with the Regent, under the auspices of Coke, a would-be facetious man, with questionable taste, turned to Mary and inquired: "Which part of the U.S.A. do you come from—the '*I guess*' or the '*I calculate*?'" The Regent, who overheard the question, bent forward and said: "From neither—they come from the 'I fascinate!'"

Mary's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Paterson, who married Jerome Bonaparte and was repudiated by him at the command of Napoleon, often planned to visit Holkham. She used to affect Royal state; and Countess Esterhazy told me that on one occasion in Baltimore she ordered out a glass State Coach intending to drive in it, but such a crowd collected that she had to abandon her intention.

Another *habitué* at Holkham was the famous Dr. Parr, who married a Miss Eyre; and the following couplet, said to have originated there, was appreciated by the wags of that day:

> When Maiden Eyre preferred her prayer
> From Heaven her wish to gain,
> These words alone that prayer made known—
> "Parr-donnez-moi—Amen!"

Norwich at that far-off date was rightly considered a very beautiful city; and one wonders how its proud citizens would have regarded a recent proposal respecting it. The story runs that the representative of an American syndicate approached the Dean with an offer to buy the Cathedral and its surrounding buildings in order to transport the whole to America. "I want to negotiate," he said. "To whom does it all belong?"

"I really don't know," said the Dean, perplexed. "It isn't for sale."

"But is it the property of the King?" persisted the American.

"I don't think so."

"Of the Bishop?"

"Oh, no!"

"But it must belong to someone!" roared the exasperated man of business. "How can I go home from this benighted country and tell 'em *you just grow these things wild*?"

Bygone Norwich, besides being beautiful, was a great intellectual centre, and amongst the most prominent of its citizens, of course, was Harriet Martineau, who used to relate one yarn which surely rivalled the famous account in the *Bab Ballads* of Brown and Jones on the desert island when "They could not chat together; they had not been introduced." One day in an hotel she and several friends were talking by the fire when she suddenly discovered that the dress of one of the ladies was alight. Commotion ensued, and happily the burning garment was extinguished. Thereupon a polite old lady sitting opposite remarked with the utmost self-complacency: "I *had* observed for some time that that

lady's dress was burning; but as I had not the honour of an introduction to her, I did not like to mention it!"

There was another citizen of that date respecting whom tales still linger on account of the peculiarly inept nature of his remarks and the general confusion of his ideas, which must have presented a refreshing contrast to the highly intellectual atmosphere with which he was surrounded. This was a Mr. Herring, a malaprop, more celebrated than pretty Jane, who, walking over the cobbles in the town, complained bitterly that "the stones of Norwich are so hard!" and who confidently announced his intention of building a south wall all round his garden. At times he would air one of his chronic grievances—the stupid fashion in which sign-posts were set up in the country: "One has either to dismount, or else ride all round them, in order to read what is written on the boards. Now if they were only fixed on a pivot with a string attached so that one could pull them round to see them, it would be so much more convenient!"

Mr. Herring, who was a humble opponent of my great-grandfather in politics, was once, in the days of William IV, called upon to present a Tory petition to the Sailor King. The genial monarch, deeming that his homely subject was ill at ease, sought about for an agreeable topic of conversation to relieve the tension, and remarked graciously: "Ah, Mr. Herring, Norwich is a fine city—a very fine city!" "It hev' been!" was Mr. Herring's ineloquent rejoinder; and Coke, when he heard of it, remarked with satisfaction that the Tories had chosen a suitable representative!

On the day when Coke, at the age of sixty-nine, at length heard the guns booming from the harbour at Wells which announced the birth to him of a son and heir, he felt but one anxiety. Earnestly he desired that his Whig principles should be perpetuated in the infant whose advent was then viewed as a subject for international rejoicing. "It is but natural that I should wish for a son," he declared, "but rather than that son should prove a Tory, I would have no son at all!" And he early inculcated sound Constitutional doctrines into the youthful brain of his successor, with the result that that successor became a Conservative! Yet Lady Anne, his child-wife, was even more pronounced in her political views, and as a Radical Keppel, held that the creed of her Whig Lord was far too tame—indeed a tale has survived illustrative of her views towards those who were "merely Whigs." When the Whig Mr. Bulwer of Heydon went to stay at Holkham a Radical guest happened to arrive at the same time. Lady Anne, neglecting Mr. Bulwer, pointedly devoted all her attention to the Radical, and finally offered to show the latter to his room. As she quitted the Saloon for this purpose, she glanced back over her shoulder to where the neglected Mr. Bulwer was standing, and remarked gravely: "The footman will show you to your room—*you* are of Mr. Coke's party."

A granddaughter of Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, still has a vivid recollection of how she was invited to Holkham in company with other juvenile visitors to celebrate the heir's fourteenth birthday. The little girls all dressed in prim, clean muslin dresses, no doubt well distended over hoops, were waiting to troop into tea, when the young hero of the day ran in amongst them with a red-hot poker and effectually scattered his screaming guests.

Coke of Norfolk never allowed his sons to go to either of the Universities, which his father had denounced as "hot-beds of vice," but my uncle was given every advantage which private education and travel could bestow, and he mixed freely with the noted men and women of his generation. At the age of sixteen he travelled abroad with the celebrated Lady Holland, who fain would have ruled Europe but occasionally failed to rule her still unsubmissive Lord. That lady, as her past career left something to be desired, was not permitted by Coke to visit Holkham and thus to mix with his womenkind; but since Lord Holland was one of his oldest friends, and no objection could exist to a mere lad travelling in the lady's train, young Coke found himself in Paris under the wing of this formidable chaperon. On one occasion he drove with her and her husband to Versailles, Lord and Lady Holland travelling first in a coach-and-four, while he followed in another coach-and-four with the valet and maid. He had many reminiscences of the strange couple.

"Lady Holland was a very disagreeable woman," he used to explain; "I don't suppose she had a friend in the world; but I'll tell you what she did have and what made many people go to her parties—she had a rare good cook, a wonderful cook. I remember dining with her in South Street. Macaulay was there, and there was a most excellent dinner. She told us that the butler had arrived that morning from Brittany." My uncle, in fact, was present on the celebrated occasion when Lady Holland silenced a loquacious guest by saying abruptly: "Let us hear Macaulay!" Only one thing ever alarmed the redoubtable lady. She was terrified at a thunderstorm; and at the first flash of lightning would beat a precipitate retreat to the cellar, insisting, when my uncle was present, that he should bear her company. "Did you like going with her?" he was once asked. "There was no question whether I liked it or not!" he replied ruefully, "she was a most masterful woman. She just told you you were to go—and down you went!"

Nevertheless Lady Holland had other weaknesses of which my uncle in travelling with her must have become aware. For one she was terrified in a carriage and habitually drove so slowly that it used to be said the very hearses passed her, cheering as they went! I have likewise a quaint letter from my great-grandfather's old friend, Roger Wilbraham, written to the Bishop of Norwich on July 9th, 1828, in which the writer remarks:

"I once heard Lady Holland, who is certainly one of the most enlightened women in England, say that she never would set out upon a journey on a Friday; and when I expostulated with her on the incongruity, not to use any stronger word, of such a mode of acting, her answer was, 'I do not know; but I have seen so many accidents and misfortunes happen to persons setting out upon a journey on that day, that I am *determined* that I never will do so.'"

Lady Holland discovered another subject for superstition, according to a picturesque story. Once at Holland House the famous picture by Reynolds of herself and Lord Holland in the library attended by Dr. Allen and William Doggett, fell with a crash from the wall. Handsome Miss Fox, afterwards Lady Lilford, exclaimed prophetically "*There will be no heir to the House of Holland!*" And so it proved.

Other recollections of the formidable lady used to be given to me by Miss Bessie Stephenson, a daughter of Lady Mary Keppel by her marriage with Henry Stephenson, sometime equerry to the Duke of Sussex. When Lady Holland used to dine with Lady Mary, Bessie was sent down as a little girl to receive the lady and escort her to a boudoir on the ground floor, where she changed her headgear. Lady Holland always arrived in a bonnet, but brought with her a large bonnet-box containing her evening turban, while a maid came with her to superintend its correct adjustment; and during the somewhat lengthy operation she used to cross-question Bessie closely respecting the guests who had been invited to meet her, expressing meanwhile her disgust or approbation with unstinted frankness and in unmeasured language.

Lord Holland, in contradistinction to his masterful spouse, my uncle described as a delightful man. He suffered frightfully from gout, but in spite of this and the fact that he had to be wheeled about in a chair, he was invariably amiable and cheerful. When Lady Holland had had enough of him, or when she saw him about to drink champagne, which was bad for his complaint, she used to say to the page, "Wheel Lord Holland away!" and he was wheeled ignominiously away, talking hard all the time.

On another occasion when my uncle was in Paris while the Hollands were there, he drove over to Versailles again and saw Louis Philippe in a wheel chair. Lord Holland was also in a chair, and Lady Holland, not to be outdone, insisted on being wheeled too, although she was quite well and able-bodied.

At that time my uncle's brother, Henry Coke was in Paris with a tutor, and the French people were very kind to the little boy, and took much notice of him. He used to set traps and they were filled with rabbits and pheasants by the courtly French!

Another of my uncle's reminiscences was that of watching the cock-fights which took place in the portico at Holkham on wet days. All the guests used to gather round the window and view

the contest with the keenest interest. An attentive spectator was his godfather, the old Duke of Sussex, who was very devoted to him. Through his childhood the old Duke always kept him supplied with presents of toys, and one of his earliest recollections was seeing the Duke puffing at a long German pipe, and enveloped in a cloud of smoke which it was almost impossible for any eye to penetrate.

Badly as the Duke treated his first wife, Lady Augusta Murray, he could be a genial guest and affectionate friend. He used to stay at Holkham for a couple of months in the winter and was like one of the family, save that he was a great stickler for etiquette. The ladies had to wear gloves in his presence, and finger-bowls at dinner were of course prohibited, but these had never been seen at Holkham since the days when, by means of them, the Jacobites toasted "the King over the water."

One day my grandfather came down to dinner in a new blue swallow-tail coat freshly arrived from the tailor, and remained blissfully ignorant of the funny appearance he presented, till the Duke slapped him heartily on the back—"Very becoming, Stanhope, very becoming!" he cried, adding, "Impossible not to love a man who comes down to dinner with his buttons all done up in silver paper!"

The Duke and the celebrated Lord Althorp were the only two guests who ever smoked at Holkham. The latter succeeded his father as Earl Spencer in 1834, and was, as my uncle expressed it: "The best man I ever knew—the very best!" He was appointed guardian to my uncle and his young brothers on the death of their father. The other guardian was "Bear" Ellice, who afterwards married Anne, Lady Leicester, and whom my uncle disliked cordially. He used to tell the latter frankly: "I will do anything Lord Spencer tells me—but I won't listen to you!"

In 1842 my uncle attended the funeral of his father—that funeral the like of which Norfolk had never witnessed, with its train of mourners which is said to have stretched about four miles along the road to Tittleshall. Yet he used to relate that, while all the country mourned, the mutes on the hearse got drunk, and the onlookers near the church, who had waited for over four-and-twenty hours, were so infuriated at the prospect of not effecting an entry into the edifice at the psychological moment and made such a rush towards the doorway that a panic nearly ensued.

At the age of twenty-one my uncle married his first wife, Juliana, daughter of Samuel Whitbread, by whom he had eleven children. She died in 1870; and in 1875 he married the Hon Georgiana Cavendish, eldest daughter of the second Lord Chesham. His father had married Jane Dutton in 1775, so there was exactly a hundred years between the marriages of father and son. It has become a hardy annual in the Press to descant on the discrepancy in age presented by different members of the Coke family in each

generation; but one of the results of this second marriage was to place half-a-century between Lord Leicester's eldest daughter and his youngest son, while a great-granddaughter was one year older than her great-uncle. So numerous indeed were the ramifications of the family that it used to be a jest among London hostesses: "We cannot give a ball—the Cokes are in mourning!" while, as in a former generation, when the "great Coke of Norfolk" was mistaken for a superlative chef, many are the good stories to which a dual interpretation of the family patronymic have given rise. Perhaps few were more engaging then the *faux pas* committed by my husband. "What do you think of so-and-so?" asked Lady Leicester, referring to a visitor who had just taken her departure. "Oh—a terribly vulgar-looking woman!" he exclaimed. "She has a face just like a cook!" This, be it noted, in a room peopled with Cokes.

My uncle, who was Keeper of the Privy Seal to the Prince of Wales for nearly forty years, never took any prominent place in politics. He found his greatest enjoyment, as his father had so earnestly desired that he should do, in leading a quiet country existence upon his estate. His love of a simple life and hatred of luxury and display was inherent, and he had a fine contempt for the lavish luncheons which it was customary in some houses to send out with the guns. Bread and cheese and beer he considered to be the fare of true sportsmen; and in Norfolk it was said that King Edward, when Prince of Wales, used to go to the sideboard with the rest and cut himself a chunk of bread and cheese. Nevertheless, a tale runs that once, failing fully to appreciate this Spartan fare, the Prince thought to provide against it betimes, and remarked to his host at breakfast: "I wish you would order me a flask of brandy." "Sir," was the inexorable reply, "you are welcome to anything in my house except brandy at nine o'clock in the morning!" Another tale which belongs to a later date was that when King Edward motored over to Holkham, and all were greeting him with civility, my uncle, eyeing his Sovereign, observed with brevity: "What your Majesty wants is a good wash!"

Such stories—and there are many—even if apocryphal, are characteristic. Father and son were alike sincere of speech, independent of spirit, lovers of simplicity. They represented a type now rapidly vanishing throughout England, and for whose loss this country will be poorer. In other respects the son of Coke of Norfolk did not belie his parentage. The land which he reclaimed, the improvements effected upon his estates, the well-being of his tenants, and the magnificent sums expended by him in charity, constitute a record worthy of the race from which he sprang. He achieved a monumental work in draining that part of his property which includes Wellingham, Tittleshall, Godwick and Mileham; while the enclosing and planting of Holkham Bay not only secured a

large tract of land, but was a valuable protection to that part of the coast from the encroachments of the sea.

At the close of his life, a patriarchal figure, he was driven daily to inspect the estate, on which his keenest interest still centred. When he could no longer walk to a carriage, poles were run through straps on either side of the couch on which he lay, and he was carried thus to the little pony-carriage, in which he made his tour of inspection. The burden of years left him in possession of ample contentment, so that at the end of his days, as he lay upon his couch in the saloon at Holkham, he remarked smilingly to a friend : " This is a very pleasant existence."

The greatest book-lover and most intellectual of that generation was Henry Coke, who died at the age of 89. Extreme deafness blighted the close of his life, but even in those latter days of a hermit-like existence, he rejoiced in his voluminous library where he told me that every volume was a friend, well known from cover to cover ; and to the last he wrote his conclusions on religious, scientific and philosophical problems with a clarity and a profundity alike arresting. His remarkable book, *Creeds of the Day*, he told me, represented nine years' work, but it was strangled in its birth by a curious ill-fortune which he related in the following letter to me, the rest of which refers to my mother's Reminiscences, which were published in conjunction with part of the Journal of my Yorkshire grandfather, John Spencer-Stanhope.

20th January, 1905

I am really extremely flattered by the nice things you say about *The Creeds* and greatly value the interest taken in it by one so sympathetic and talented as yourself . . . .

It was an unlucky book in one way, for not long after its publication, the premises of Trübner—the publisher—were destroyed by fire—and *The Creeds* with them ! Trübner died very soon afterwards, and I had no heart to reproduce a book which, after all, appeals to very few readers. It had served my original purpose, which was to clear and organize my own opinions.

Your mother's Memoirs interested me intensely . . . . As I read, her bright vivacity and quiet intelligence were always present to me ; and then her allusions to people known only to Stanhopes and Cokes brought back old and happy days so vividly. When, for instance, I came across her mention of Mitchell, your grandmother's maid, I felt as if I were a child again, we were so fond of the old thing. I used constantly to sit in her room and watch her trim caps on a Dummy head, which always excited my admiration !

The latter part of the book, your grandfather's Journal, was not so interesting to me. I had the greatest affection

for him. He was one of the sweetest-blooded men I ever met. But I can't help feeling that so much of his Journal published under the same cover tends to smother the really bright work of your mother.

I shall have corrected nearly all the proofs of my new book before I go abroad. You shall have a copy of it for your own. It will interest or, let us say, amuse you.

The book in question, *Tracks of a Rolling Stone*, he told me he had written in the space of five months without a single diary or note to refresh remembrance. Those who have read it will recall its charm of style and clearness of narrative, besides the lure of the philosophical reflections with which, throughout, it is lightly interspersed. Yet when it was going to press, Mr. Reginald Smith wrote to the author suggesting that all paragraphs of this description should be drastically eliminated " as the public do not care for reflections of this sort." " By all means consider our contract at an end, if you wish," wrote back my uncle, " but I shall not alter one line ! " And thus the original charm of the book was preserved intact.

V

But ere the companions of her nursery days had thus reached the confines of existence my mother was awaiting the ringing down of the curtain. Her great activity of mind and will had outstripped her bodily strength, so that in an endeavour to prolong her life she was forcibly made to adopt the habits of an invalid. She fretted pitifully at the change, while swiftly under the new *régime* her strength declined. Even so, her brain retained its vigour. During the last two years of her life she wrote the book of Memoirs referred to, full of lively incident, told with such facility that the original MS. scarcely shows an erasure. Next, fearing that the ink was fading in the Journal above referred to which her father had written when a prisoner under Napoleon, she sent for the heavy tomes from Yorkshire and copied out and condensed a great portion of these; a task which might well have daunted a person in the prime of life and health. Finally, she worked five large needlework pictures from designs made by William and Evelyn De Morgan, and in the original these were merely outlined; it was left to the worker's ingenuity to fill in the light and shade and all the minutiæ of each subject. Thus in one picture in my possession, a gorgeous, fantastic peacock drawn by De Morgan, my mother copied every detail of the feathers direct from the plumage of a living bird. And all this during two years when she was becoming weaker day by day till she could scarcely hold a pen or a needle, surely constitutes a remarkable instance of mental and physical achievement. She died the Christmas after I married.

CHAPTER XIV

Tales of Places

I

RECENTLY an enterprising American lady remarked that she was about to write her Recollections; "and I shall call it—" she announced, "*Beds I have Slept in.*"

A comprehensive autobiography might obviously be written round such a title, which might likewise have formed a suitable heading for this chapter, unless it is named according to pretty Jane. For the comments of the latter respecting country-house visiting are varied and graphic. After staying, for instance, in a house where there was little to do save to devour meals which were too frequent and too ample, Jane expressed herself of the opinion that "The worst of this country-house visiting is one is likely to die of stuffication." Another time she cheered my drooping spirits in a contretemps. I was visiting friends who were very High-Church, and the first morning, descending hungrily at the sound of a loud gong, I found myself escorted—not to the dining-room where I longed to be—but into an icy-cold chapel where I inadvertently took a seat on the side reserved for men only, and next discovered miserably that I alone of all the females present had nothing on my head. The service ended, I fled upstairs. "Jane," I said, "I have done a dreadful thing! I went into the chapel without a hat!" And Jane looked thoughtful. "Couldn't you tell them—" she suggested, "that you had a 'Derry and Toms' hair-frame in your hair? *That* ought to satisfy them!"

And once when I was gazing at the ruined portion of an old Castle where we were staying, I remarked to her on its melancholy grandeur. "'The abomination of desolation standing in the place where it ought not,'" I quoted. "By the way, what a very quaint verse that is. How should you interpret it, Jane?" "*She* under the misletoe when *He* hasn't come!" expounded Jane promptly.

This, however, is in the nature of a digression; but while space will not permit my giving any adequate account of the interesting houses I have visited and the historical stories connected with these, I cannot omit the mention of a few.

For one, I feel it impossible to quit the subject of Norfolk without referring to two people who are now no more, but who endeared

themselves alike to me and to all who knew them. At the time when I was writing *Coke of Norfolk* I had considerable correspondence with Sir William ffolkes, an old friend and neighbour of my family; and before long he wrote to urge us to visit him.

Hillington was looking its loveliest when we arrived there one brilliant spring day, the foliage was still a tender green, the may trees were all white with blossom, and the long lush grass in the park was ankle-deep in waves of emerald freshness.

Our host and hostess struck me at once as a curious contrast to each other both physically and mentally. Tall, statuesque and reticent of speech, Lady ffolkes was a singularly beautiful woman with a dignity of manner which occasionally had a chilling effect on those who did not know the warmth of heart and sincerity which it concealed. "Lady ffolkes requires knowing—Billy ffolkes you know at once," was a common saying in Norfolk; and the mere fact that he was "Billy" to all who knew him bespoke his popularity. Bluff and downright, his talk was unstudied and spontaneous; open-handed and open-hearted he was like a genial ray of sunshine which warmed all with whom it came in contact; even his mannerisms seemed an attractive part of his personality. His quaint gruff voice, although the result of an operation to his throat, seemed characteristic, as did his indescribable restlessness—neither his mind or body could remain inert; he ate his breakfast pacing up and down the room, and at dinner it was obviously purgatory for him to remain seated from the soup to dessert. On the first occasion when he offered to rush off in the middle of the meal to fetch a book for me to verify some reference, I expostulated politely. "Oh, don't stop him!" murmured Lady ffolkes, "he will be so thankful for the exercise!"

The house was of neo-Gothic architecture; and the first night after our arrival we sat in the library which, with its vaulted, groined stone roof, was more like a chapel than a room. "I wanted to sit here," explained Sir William, "because I want to know if you hear Nutty, the family ghost. We have an idea that it can only be heard by someone who is a member of the family." And he then proceeded to describe the vagaries of this spectre, which was heard but not seen, and about whose history apparently nothing was known, although he had bestowed upon it a nickname which seemed to indicate affectionate familiarity.

It appeared that a small boudoir next to the library belonged to the oldest part of the house. A door from the garden opened directly into this, and a staircase, long since done away with, formerly led thence to the upper rooms. The impression was that the mysterious "Nutty" was seeking for the extinct staircase; and Sir William described how constantly as they sat in the library reading they heard footsteps pass the window, sounding distinctly on the gravel path without; next there would be a sound of some-

one entering the little boudoir from the garden, followed by an attempt to open the library door.

"We have heard it so often and so distinctly," said Sir William, "that, in spite of previous experience, I have been unable to believe there was not someone there; and I have rushed out and hunted up and down the path in front of the window where the instant before we heard the footsteps passing—but always with the same result, not a soul was in sight! The very night before you arrived we not only heard the footsteps come past as before, but the handle of the library door was turned and *rattled*. We have, however, got so used to it now that we merely remark, 'There's "Nutty" again!' and take little further notice."

I was very curious to hear the mysterious footsteps, but unfortunately we soon forgot to listen for these, and if "Nutty" came her presence was unheard in the continuous conversation.

One night at Hillington Sir William had out some of his fine old glass for us to see, and the table was a beautiful sight covered with it. He told me it had been considered in bygone days to be worth £500, but the value since then must have greatly appreciated. When this glass was used, the servants were never allowed to remove it at night. The dinner-table was left untouched till the following morning, when it was carefully cleared by daylight.

The shooting at Hillington was then let to King Edward, and one morning, it being Sir William's birthday, the King arrived unexpectedly with Queen Alexandra and several members of the royal family to bring him presents, after giving which the King explained that he and his party had been shooting in the neighbourhood and were all desperately hungry. "We won't come into the drawing-room, ffolkes," said the King, "but if you can give us some food in the hall—even bread and cheese—we shall be extremely grateful!" So a luncheon was hurriedly improvised in the hall, and a party of hungry Royalties trooped in and did full justice to the fare, afterwards all signing their names in the visitors' book in remembrance of a merry picnic.

Once, when Sir William was seriously ill, the King drove over from Sandringham to ask after him. Afraid lest he might make a noise which would disturb the invalid, also that a visit might cause inconvenience to Lady ffolkes in her anxiety, the King considerately left his car at the lodge, and walking on foot to the house made his way round to the back premises. Coming to the scullery door, he rang the bell, and a young scullery-maid answered the summons. "I have called to ask after Sir William," explained the King. "And who may *you* be?" queried the girl superciliously. "The King!" responded the visitor. "Ho!" yelled the girl in a sudden panic and fled for her life, leaving the King to wait with what patience he could muster till an obsequious housekeeper came hurrying apologetically to the spot.

When thinking of that kind host and hostess who are now no more, I cannot resist recording one instance of their hospitality which in my individual experience has never been equalled. Not long after our first visit there my husband was ill and threatened with an operation. I mentioned this in a letter to Sir William as a reason why we could not come to Norfolk, and by return I got back a letter: "We want you to come here when you like and stay as long as you like; and you can have a whole set of rooms to yourselves and all your meals separate if you wish; and you need never see us if you don't want to. *Just feel the house is yours for as long as you like.*" At that date Sir William and Lady ffolkes were far from well off and were living at Hillington with a reduced establishment and with a portion of the house closed in order to economize. Yet when the offer was not accepted, their regret was genuine. They were not likely to be rich, for Sir William told me that, on an average, the cottages on his estate cost him £9 per annum in repairs and the rental he received was £3!

During a subsequent visit to Hillington we drove over to Oxburgh, one of the most interesting fifteenth century houses in England, where as we sat at tea the waters of the moat lapped the ancient walls, and the swans came and looked in at the open windows waiting for a piece of cake.

One of the rooms upstairs was the bedchamber once occupied by King Henry VII and his wife Elizabeth of York when they stayed at Oxburgh in 1487. It is a chamber 33 feet long by 20 feet broad; the floor is of brick, originally, of course, strewn with scented rushes, and ancient chairs are roped off against the walls, which are covered by linenfold panelling and curious tapestry. The feature of the room, however, is a fine bedstead with curtains and a coverlet of green velvet, the latter, Lady Bedingfeld told us, having been found in a farm-house adjacent and restored to the bed, from which it had obviously at some time been stolen. The hangings are said to have been worked by Mary Queen of Scots and Bess of Hardwicke, when the latter was custodian to the captive Queen. The portion which Mary worked is adorned with a dolphin (dauphin), and under some of the quaint animals the worker has wisely stitched also the explanation of what these are intended to represent, a "swalloe," "a leparde" and "th' ostrich." Adjacent to this chamber is an oubliette concealed in the floor and entered through a trap-door which revolves on an iron axle, down which many an unhappy prisoner or fugitive must have passed, either for a night's uncomfortable durance, or for a longer and more hopeless sojourn. But in those more callous times the occupant of the bedroom adjacent would find his slumbers but little disturbed by any thought of an unhappy captive in misery or terror in the darkness below.

As we were going over the house Sir Henry told us how he had met an apparition at Oxburgh which is said to appear to

every heir of the house on his attaining his majority. I made no note of this curious story at the time, but to the best of my recollection it was as follows:

He had returned home from the University when one day, going along a passage which he showed us, he met a woman whom he did not recognize as one of the household. She passed him, and he saw her enter a room which he did not know was occupied. As her face was unfamiliar to him, and her dress peculiar, he concluded that she was some foreign lady's maid who had been brought to the house by an aunt who was then staying there. By and by, having mentioned the subject, he discovered this was not the case.

His father, having listened attentively to his description of the stranger, later took him up to a portrait in the dining room. "Tell me," he said, "was the woman you saw anything like that?" Henry Bedingfeld at once denied any likeness between the mysterious woman and the picture indicated. Again, if I recollect rightly, his father pointed out another portrait to him with the same result. Finally he led the way to the corridor where the lady had been seen and, opening the door of the unoccupied room into which she had disappeared, he pointed to a picture on the wall: "Was that at all like the woman you saw?" he questioned. "But that *is* she!" exclaimed young Bedingfeld in amazement, as he recognized both the face and dress of the mysterious stranger he had met.

It appears that one of the Bedingfelds in a former generation had married a foreign lady, and they lived unhappily. After a time she disappeared and it was given out that she had returned to her own country; but rumour hinted at a more sinister explanation. From thenceforth she appeared to every Bedingfeld on attaining his majority. "When I was your age, I saw her," related Sir Henry's father, "but I have never seen her since. And the same thing happened at the same age to my father." In life the unhappy lady had occupied the room in which her portrait now hangs, and which Sir Henry had seen the apparition entering.

From Hillington in August, 1909, we went over to Blickling to see a performance of a Masque of Anne Boleyn. I had often been to beautiful Blickling in the lifetime of Lady Lothian, and I loved the old Jacobean house with its formal flower-garden, its placid silver lake, and fine dark avenues, all of which converge towards one centre in the grounds, so that as you stand on that spot, in whatever direction you look there is a stately alley with dark over-arching foliage and a carpet of velvet sward, along which one can picture Anne passing in company with the Royal lover who was to be her murderer.

The house itself, a fine structure of red brick, is built in typical Jacobean architecture. A wide approach, flanked on either side by stables and yew hedges, terminates in an entrance bearing the date 1626, which, opening into a courtyard, leads to the picturesque

main building reputed to have been the birthplace of Anne Boleyn. In two recesses half way up the fine oak staircase are carved figures of Anne and her daughter Elizabeth; while among the many relics in the house Lady Lothian used to show a cap of Henry VIII and a nightgown worn by Anne. In the interesting church hard by are fine brasses of an aunt and great-aunt of Anne, one of which, I have heard, is the only brass in England in which a lady is represented wearing a necklace. There is also a fine effigy by G. F. Watts of Robert, 8th Marquis of Lothian, as he lay for so many years of his stricken existence. His story was a tragic one. When in 1857 he married Lady Constance Talbot, united to the woman he loved, with health, wealth, and the ownership of fine estates, his cup of happiness must have seemed filled to the brim, only to be dashed irrevocably from his lips. He and his bride went abroad for their honeymoon, and during the tour he got sunstroke. The after-result of this was paralysis, and for thirteen years he lay dying by inches, stricken down in the prime of his manhood. I have been told that he used to lie upon his couch just as Watts has depicted him upon his tomb, a handsome man of magnificent physique, but helpless as a baby. When at last death came to him, he left the choice of her future home to his wife, and she chose Blickling.

The Masque took place in front of the picturesque old house, and the setting naturally enhanced the interest. Against the background of the home where she had once dwelt, we watched the impersonation of ill-fated Anne, living and moving once more, re-enacting the drama of her love for Seymour and her courtship by Henry. In the words of the opening chorus:

> We shadows of a former day
> Here greeting you this pleasant hour
> Will show—how man is but a flower
> Of brief delight, then goes his way.
> We built upon our feet of clay
> Our lives of golden vanity;
> Then sudden our humanity
> Was brought to dust that blows away.

As a whole I found the play unconvincing because the glamour and delusion of the real stage were wanting; we were seated too near the actors, and in the blazing August sunshine they looked distressingly hot in the velvet and furs of the mediæval costumes. The end, however, afforded a true touch of poetry. After mischief, at the instigation of Wolsey, had been sown between Anne and Seymour, followed by the pageant of Henry's arrival with his retinue, the King led Anne away into the old house, attended by their resplendent train, and when the last of these had passed from view, in the ensuing silence, Destiny, a solitary sombre figure in grey draperies, came out, and shielding her eyes from the brilliant

light, stood gazing silently before her as though piercing futurity. Then she, too, turned to follow the revellers into the dim recesses of the building, and as she disappeared, the massive door rolled heavily upon its hinges and closed slowly behind her with a significant suggestion of irrevocability. At that same moment, a pretty child, dressed as Love, appeared, and running up to the closed door, beat against it desperately with his tiny fists; then, as he understood that Destiny had for ever shut out Love, he bowed his little face into his arm and wept bitterly.

It was singularly picturesque when the play was over to see people in the beautiful dress of the period wandering amid their appropiate surroundings: varlets and village maidens in their bright colours grouped round the fountain, and the lords and ladies in their satins and silks sauntering about the formal flower-garden between the massive yew hedges. One seemed transported with unexpected magic to that long-vanished world with its rich pageantry; and when, here and there, a modern dress mingled with the old-world costumes, it struck a jarring note in its comparative lack of grace and beauty.

Meanwhile over all brooded the sorry romance of Anne with its swift ending. As we were reminded by the programme, the entire tragedy of her downfall and death occupied but nineteen days: "The first of May (yt seemeth) she was informed against, the second imprisoned, the fifteenth condemned, the seventeenth deprived of her brother and friends, who suffered in her cause, and the nyneteenth executed. On the twentieth day the King married Jane Seimour, who in the nyne and twentieth was publiquely showed Queene."

In spite of Froude's conviction that Anne had a just trial, the outstanding features of the case will for all time remain unanswerable witnesses for the defence: the fact that Anne, with her quick wit and reckless tongue, failed to sustain the rôle of flatterer which alone could enchain Henry's errant fancy through an appeal to his vanity; that he was determined to be rid of her, as he subsequently rid himself of others; further, that Anne was scarcely cold in her grave ere he had married her rival. And one wonders whether the victim's amazing eulogy of her murderer on the scaffold was a post-mortem invention by some sycophant of the monarch, or whether it was a final instance of the wit which had cost her dear. There is a note of delicious irony in the alleged description of her butcher by the doomed woman: "A more gentle and mild prince never swayed septer; his bounty and clemency towards me, I am sure, have been speciall!"

II

Mention of the unhappy Anne recalls to me a story of her daughter, the great Queen Elizabeth, which was subsequently investigated

by Mr. Bram Stoker, but which we heard in the following fashion.

One summer we took an old pre-Tudor manor-house, Overcourt, in the remote village of Bisley, high up on the Cotswolds. It is a charming old building of grey stone with mullioned windows and oak-panelled rooms, also a very fine old oak staircase, and the then owner being a keen gardener, its picturesque grey stone walls were flanked by an attractive garden in which grew a wealth of rare and glowing flowers.

The house had been built in the reign of Edward IV as a royal hunting lodge, and was subsequently utilized as a place to which the royal children were sent for their health, the air of the Cotswolds throughout mediæval times being considered highly beneficial. Eventually Henry VIII presented it to Anne Boleyn, and subsequently it formed part of Queen Elizabeth's dowry. The latter is said to have stayed there as a child with her governess, and one quaint, oak-beamed room bears the name of " Princess Elizabeth's room." This has a remarkable stone fireplace, and a newel staircase, since blocked up at both ends, led directly from it to the oak-panelled dining-room, formerly the parlour. Below its windows, sheltered by an angle of the house, was also a little piece of secluded garden known as " Princess Elizabeth's garden," which, in her childish days, she is said to have tended with her own hands.

In the centre of that garden, among the flower-beds and bees, stood an old stone sarcophagus full of flowering plants. One day when I was looking at it the gardener informed me that it was " Queen Elizabeth's coffin," and later some of the village people referred to it in the same terms, till at last I remarked in some amusement to the clergyman upon the simplicity of his parishioners who believed that Queen Elizabeth had died in the Cotswolds. " But don't you know the story connected with this place ? " he said ; and thereupon proceeded to tell me the legend which for three hundred and fifty years had descended unquestioned in that remote village.

It appears that while Elizabeth was living at Overcourt with her governess Mrs. Ashley, Henry VIII came to stay for hunting at Berkeley Castle. With unusual paternal solicitude he sent word that he was coming to visit the Princess, his daughter, and great was the consequent commotion at Overcourt. As ill fortune would have it, Elizabeth at that important juncture lay ill of a " putrid fever," and not long after the arrival of the message she became rapidly worse—*and died* ! Her governess was distraught. That the Princess should have expired so inopportunely might well involve the loss of her own head, and her courage failed her when she thought of greeting the irate monarch with such tidings. So the fate of the little Princess was hushed up, and her body hurriedly and secretly interred in a stone coffin beneath the flowers in her own little garden, while a boy was induced to masquerade in her

place. He was an illegitimate son of Henry VIII (Master Neville), who bore a striking resemblance to the Princess in colouring and features. Moreover, he had been a playmate of the Princess and was well qualified to enact the part he was required to sustain.

Henry came, and was well satisfied with his sham daughter, whom he found grown tall and bonnie, and the governess was commended for her care of her royal charge; but the sequel was less easily faced. Having started the deception, Mrs. Ashley knew not how to end it, for her head was more than ever likely to be the forfeit if Henry learnt the trick which had been practised upon him.

So the masquerade was prolonged, and the boy continued to impersonate his dead half-sister, till, by and by, he ascended the throne under her name. Thus it befell that "Queen Elizabeth" was in truth a man; and there were certain historical facts which at least lent an appearance of plausibility to the tale.

For Queen Elizabeth, besides announcing that she had "the heart of a King, and a King of England too," was always said to have a masculine voice; from her earliest years she expressed her determination not to marry; she refused to allow any doctor to examine her person; and after ascending the throne she always kept Mrs. Ashley, her former governess, near her presence, and in peculiar favour.

And while throughout the centuries the legend survived in this isolated little Cotswold village, one day it received curious confirmation. During some digging operations in Princess Elizabeth's garden a stone sarcophagus was unearthed, and on its being opened, a few bones were found with the mouldering pieces of some rich brocade. The sarcophagus belonged to a date long prior to Elizabeth, but its having been utilized for this burial pointed to some mystery connected with the interment, while another fact was still more obvious. The churchyard flanked one side of the garden at Overcourt, and it would have been as easy to carry a corpse for disposal there as to bury it in the spot where it was found. The only reason, therefore, for interring anyone in the little flower-garden, *must have been some dire need for secrecy*, and all the circumstances indicated that some hurried and hidden burial had taken place for which that ancient sarcophagus had been utilized and the most secluded spot available selected.

Thus, although recent researches into the character of Queen Elizabeth seem to prove conclusively that she was of the female sex, there remains unexplained the strange persistency with which that legend of the Bisley Boy has come down unchallenged locally throughout the centuries, and also the stranger fact of that secret, mysterious burial which, at some remote date, undoubtedly gave rise to the tradition.

III

While on the subject of this curious story, I may mention a discovery of my own. One evening at Cannon Hall I was hunting through some old cupboards full of MSS., when I came upon a lot of Roundhead and Cavalier papers which had probably been lying there since the Civil War, and among them an old copybook came to light containing an unprinted ballad apparently indited by some ancestor of mine in days when it was considered one of the polite accomplishments of a gentleman to versify on passing events. The following struck me as such a singularly graphic description of the pageant to which it refers that I give it *in extenso*.

A Joyfull ballad of the Royall entrance of Quene E. . . . into the Cetye of London the 24 of November in the 31 yeire of hyr Ma^tis Reigne [1] to gyve God prayse for the ov^rthrowe of the Spanyards.

Amonge the woonderous works of God
For savegard of owre Quene
Agenst the heape of traiterous foes
Whiche have confounded bene
The great and myghty overthrowe
Of Spanyerds prowde in mynde
Have gyven us all just cause to saye
The Lord ys good and kynde.

And that we myght not thankeles be
Unto owre Gracious God
That hathe in mercye cast awaye
Hys greevous scurgynge Rod
And for the blessyngs manyfold
Bestowed upon thys Land
The State wherof makes all the worled
Amazed for to stand.

Owre noble Queene and peerlesse prynce
Dyd make a straight decre
That throughe hyr land a sollemne daye
Unto the Lord Shoulde be
To yeld all lowde and honor hye
Unto hys gloryous name
Whose hand upholds owre happynes
And hyr tryumphant reigne

The twentye foure of November
This joyfull daye was seene
Whiche was made holye to the Lord
By owre most Greycous Queene
Upon whose heade the Lord had plast
The Royall Englysshe Crowne
Thies thyrte yeires to weare the same
Wythe glorye and renowne.

Therfore to lovelye London fayre
Owre noble Queene woulde goe
And at Paules Crosse before hyr God
Hyr thankefull herte to showe

[1] Sunday, November 24, 1588.

Wheare prynces and people dyd consent
Wythe joyfull myndes to meete
To glorifye the God of heaven
Wythe palmes and voycs sweete

Wheras a ᵖper[1] place was made
For hyr great Grace to stand
The comfort of good Cittizens
And pryd of all the Land
The Cyttizens no soner harde
Hyr Maᵗᶦˢ intent
But for hyr welcome they ppared
All pompt the coule invent[2]

And from Temple Barre unto Paules Churche
Alonge one syde the waye
The Cittizens in theyr lyveries
Eache one in ryche araye
Wythe streamers fayre and lyttyll flags
In order due dyd stand.
Wherin theyr armes weare rychelye drawne
To make each trade decernd

The Gentlemen of the Innes of Courte
From Sargents Inne also
From Temple barre on th' other side
Dyd make a seemely shoe
And from that place unto Paules Churche
On evʳye side in deede
The Cittizens of London stood
As yt was well decreed

And evye Companye by themselves
As in theyr Railes they stood
Had yongmen store in velvet coates
And chaynes of gold all good
And each of theym to cleare the waye
As they dyd wayttyng stand
Dyd styll avoyde the multytude
Wythe walkynge staves in hande

The streetes were hange wythe tapystrye
Of coulours freshe and bryght
And evʳye thynge provyded fytt
For suche a gloryous syght
The Lord Maior and hys brethrene
In scarlet rich arayd
Upon theyr steeds at Temple barr
For theyr Dread Soveraigne stayed

Then came Hyr Royal Majestye
Most virgynlyke in syght
And gloryouslye attyred was
In clothe of sylver whyte
And eke the charyot wheare she sate
Of sylver clothe dyd shyne
And mylke whyte steeds dyd beare the same
All trapped ryche and fyne.

---

[1] Proper. [2] All pomps they could invent.

And when she cam to Temple Bar
Wheras the maior dyd stand
Hys sword on bended knees he gave
Into Hyr Heighnes hand
Who grcyouslye dyd take the same
Before Hyr Nobles there
And gave the Maior a Septer rych
Whiche he dyd bare head beire

And hundreth Knyghts and Gentylmen
Dyd fyrst before hyr ryde
On gallant fayre and stately steedes
Theyr servants by theyr sydes
The Aldermen in skarlet gownes
Dyd after take theyr place
Then rode Hyr Heighnesse Trumpetters
Soundyng before Hyr Grace

And all the Sergants at the Lawes
In scarlet there were seene
The Lord Chieff Baron and Judges grave
Rode all before owre Queen
In scarlet robes most ryche in syght
And comelye to behold
Wythe collers fayre abowt theyr neckes
Of pure and ꝑfect gold.

The Noble Lord Heighe Chauncellor
Nighe gravelye rode in place
The Archebysshoppe of Canterburye
Before hyr Royall Grace
The Lord Ambassador of France
And all hys Gentylmen
In velvet blacke amonge the Lords
Dyd take hys place as then

The Lord Marques of Wynchester
Bare headed there was scene
Who bare the sword in comely sorte
Before owre Noble Queene
The Noble Earle of Oxford then
Heighe Chamberlayn of England
Rode ryght before hyr Majestye
Hys bonnet in hys hand

Then all hyr Graces pentioners
On foote dyd take theyr place
Wyth theyr weapones in theyr hands
To guard hyr Royall Grace
The Earle of Essex after hyr
Dyd ryde the next indeed
Whyche by a costlye sylken rayne
Dyd leade hyr Grace's Steed

Then followed the Ladies fayre
Of Honor afterward
And on each one of theym dyd wayte
A Yeoman of the Guard

Attyred in theyr coates most ryche
All wrought wythe glystring gold
Whiche was a most delightfull syght
And joyfull to behold.

And so to Paules she rode alonge
A mylde and softlye pace
The people crying joyfully
Lord Jesus save youre Grace
The grownd before the gates of Paules
Wythe tapystrye was spred
Of purpose for hyr Royall Grace
Whan she dyd lyght to tread

Whearas a table was p'pared
In pryncely sorte that daye
Wheareat hyr noble Grace dyd kneele
In humble sorte to praye
Before she entered in the Churche
Even at the Temple Gate
As soon as she was taken from
Hyr Chariot of Estate

And after by two Noble mene
Alonge the Churche was led
Wythe a golden canopye
Carryed ore hyr head
The Cleargye wythe pcessyon brought
Hyr Grace into the quyer
Whearas hyr Majestye was sette
The Servyce for to heare

And afterward unto Paules Crosse
She dyd dyrectlye passe
Wheare by the byshop of Salysburye
A sermon preached was
The Earl of Oxford openyng than
The wyndowes for hyr Grace
The Chyldren of the Hospytall
She sawe before hyr face

And everye tyme hyr Grace dyd come
To shewe hyrselfe in syght
The peoples hart were ravyshed
Wythe joye and swete delyght
Whyche beyng done wythe thanks to God
She dyd to dyner go
To the byshope of London's place
Hyr Noble peers also

And dynner beyng ended then
In order as she came
She dyd returne unto the Courte
Wythe all hyr noble trayne
Delyveryng the sword agayn
Into the Lord Maior hand
A thousand torches burnyng bryght
Alonge the waye dyd stande

Thus went owre noble Queene awaye
Unto hyr Heighnesse Courte
Wheare multytude of people dyd
Contynuallye resorte
Dysyryng God for ever more
Hyr Grace to keepe and save
That longe unto hyr subjects joye
Hyr p'sence [1] We may have.

FINIS.

And when from the passing of that splendid pageant through what was then "lovelye London fayre" I turn once more to modern life, I recall another scene. Not long since I was going over the ruins of Kenilworth when an old guide was depicting enthusiastically the aforetime glories of the place, especially of the banqueting-hall, where Queen Elizabeth once feasted and danced. Unfortunately, in the very centre of the apartment is now shown the forlorn trunk of a decapitated tree which sometime had incongruously sprung up amongst the ruins, and an American present, amused at the old man's enthusiasm, began heckling him.

"Waal now," he said, "you say those days were so wonderful, but they had no telephones, no automobiles, no aircraft—and what do you call this"?— tapping the tree-trunk—"I suppose *this* was here then?"

The old man turned away with disgust. "They had no telephones, and no motors and no aircraft," he admitted. "But"—tapping the tree-trunk—"even *you* can never go away and say they couldn't get a trunk call!"

IV

A house which appeals strongly both to the antiquarian and to any lover of the beautiful is Drayton House, Northamptonshire, the residence of Mr. Stopford-Sackville, and I was surprised recently, when reading Lady Paget's Reminiscences, to find that she had appeared so little to appreciate its unique charm. The massive pile of buildings, hoary with time, have remained untouched throughout the centuries, and Horace Walpole, visiting it a hundred and sixty years ago, wrote a description of it which would be accurate to-day.

Oh, the dear old place, you would be transported with it. The front is a brave, strong castle wall, embattled and loopholed for defence. Passing through the great gate, you come to a sumptuous but narrow modern Court, behind which rises the old Mansion, all towers and turrets. The house is excellent, has a vast hall, with dining-room, King's chamber, trunk Gallery at the top of the house, handsome chapel and seven or eight distinct apartments. . . . Then it is covered with portraits, crammed with old china, furnished richly and not a rag on it under forty, fifty, or a thousand years old, and not a bed or a chair that has lost a tooth or got a grey hair, so well are they preserved.

[1] Presence.

I rummaged it from head to foot, examined every spangled bed or ornamented pair of bellows—for such there are,' and in short I do not believe the old mansion was ever better pleased with an inhabitant since the days of Walter de Drayton; except when it has received the divine old Mistress (the famous Lady Betty Germaine, daughter of Charles, Earl of Berkeley). The garden is just as Sir John Germaine brought it from Holland, pyramidal yews, trellises and square cradle walks with window clipped in them. . . .

As then, the supreme charm of the place lies in its air of unspoilt antiquity. The oldest part, built about 1270 by the Veres, is embattled and crenellated. The largest portion is Elizabethan, built by the Lord Mordaunt in 1584—the date is on a gable. His son entertained King James here in 1605, an interesting account of the visit being preserved in the parish church registers. Ten weeks afterwards this same Lord Mordaunt was arrested for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot, and left to languish in the Tower, where he died; and three years later, as an *amende honorable*, Charles I created his son Earl of Peterborough.

A daughter of the house subsequently married the Duke of Norfolk, and on his decease wedded the adventurer, Sir John Germaine, half-brother of King William III. At her death at Drayton, Sir John married Lady Betty Berkeley, who reigned there as a widow for fifty years, and enriched the treasures of the house with a vast collection of china and Queen Anne furniture, Oriental lacquer and fine tapestries.

The bed of James I remains in the State room, and all the historic furniture is in fine condition, sets of chairs being covered in their original needlework. Among the splendid tapestries are four great pieces woven for Elizabeth's favourite, Lord Leicester, probably at Brancaster, and bearing his achievement of arms. There are many fine pieces of Mortlake and Flemish work, while the "King's dining-room," where James I dined, is hung with full-length portraits of the Earls of Peterborough. But the most attractive room is the great hall of the thirteenth century. Save for its being panelled by Lord Peterborough in the reign of William III, it remains in its original state. There are seven staircases at Drayton. The principal oak staircase is Elizabethan (1584), while the very beautiful spiral walnut staircase, with twisted balusters, was inserted by Lord Peterborough about 1690.

I occupied a room known as the Decca room, and in the floor of a powdering closet leading out of it were two loose boards which, being raised, revealed a small, secret chamber beneath. There, it is said Bishop Ussher was concealed from the Cromwellians in Charles I's reign; no steps, however, led down to it, and the fugitive must either have leapt into his hiding-place, or have used a removable ladder to descend into it. Standing among the *débris* of the old room is a huge coffer, in size and appearance not unlike a coffin. No one could tell me what it contained or recollect whether its contents had ever been examined.

One morning we were shown the contents of a huge lacquer chest which stands in the King's dining-room full of beautiful brocades and exquisite needlework, presumably done by former ladies of the family. One bed-coverlet was white satin all worked in raised gold, untarnished throughout the centuries; another, an exquisite shade of yellow silk, was worked in figures after a Chinese design. Then there were pieces in elaborate Tudor pattern, with the colours as fresh as though they had but recently left the dainty fingers which stitched them, and which for three centuries have been mingling with the dust. Several very fine pieces of needlework known as Decca work resembled the chair-coverings in my bedroom, and had given rise to its name. A companion chest which we had not time to examine contained the rich robes and uniforms depicted in many of the family portraits.

Outside, the formal gardens retain their original Tudor lay-out. The pleachéd alleys, tall hedges of yew and hornbeam, the ancient bowling-green, the lead-work, sundials and Elizabethan stone balustrading, make a picture of rare beauty. The wonderful iron gates, the work of Tijou, were set up in various parts of the garden by the Duchess of Norfolk, and all bear her ducal coronet and the date MDCCI. In the park the avenues of oak, beech and elm are magnificent—those of oak being contemporary with the thirteenth-century house. Mr. Sackville told us that an old gardener had been fond of relating how once he saw three dukes walking together in the grounds—the great Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Dorset and the Duke of Norfolk.

From Drayton one morning we drove over to Ticthmarsh, where once had resided the little ancestor whose portrait had comforted me as a child from its alleged likeness to myself and dissimilarity to Waddy. It was in the seventh year of the reign of Edward IV that the Pickerings purchased from William, eldest son of the Earl of Worcester, "the old Manor House and the Avowsons of Tychemershe and Aldwinkle." One branch of the family was previously settled at Gretton in the same county, yet why they moved from their original home of Wyndunderwater, in Westmorland, where they are described as having been "an ancient and respectable family," long before the days of Edward, is wrapped in mystery, as is their ultimate departure from Northamptonshire. Their ancient manor-house in the latter county was ruthlessly destroyed, and its former site is now only located by an old tree; but in the handsome church hard by the place seems peopled with the vanished generations who, with the Drydens, represented the two great Puritan families in the neighbourhood till such time as the restoration of Charles II made it politic for them to change their tactics.

A lady of outstanding personality among the bygone generations was Elizabeth, sister to the little boy who had resembled me. The eldest daughter of Sir Gilbert Pickering and Elizabeth Montagu,

she was born in the year King Charles set up his standard at Nottingham, and became one of the prominent figures in the society of her day; she lived to the age of eighty-three, dying in 1725. Mistress Betty, as she was known to her contemporaries, became an artist of considerable local fame, and was revered alike for her talent and her beauty. She, we are told, "amused and employed herself in painting and instructing many young women in drawing." She executed "fine needlework and other elegant arts," and seems to have been something of a sculptress, for many of the churches in the neighbourhood of Oundle were "decorated with altar-pieces, monuments and ornaments of different kinds, the works of her hands," and for long "her descendants were possessed of many portraits and some good pictures painted by her," among others, a portrait of her uncle, Lord Sandwich, which formerly hung at Drayton, the families having intermarried.

A short time ago portraits of a whole generation of the Titchmarsh Pickerings and their relations drifted into Christie's, attributed to the brush of Van Dyck, or "the school of Van Dyck"; but they were probably the actual pictures once painted by Mistress Betty, who strove to ape that fashionable painter. Among them was the portrait of Lord Sandwich, a singularly handsome man, with fine features and the lovelocks of a cavalier.

From that far-away past come many quaint tales respecting the notable lady who was that *rara avis* of her day—an amateur artist. We are told how Mr. Pepys, smitten with her beauty and talent, was suddenly seized in church one Sunday with the notion of making a match for her with "Mr. Hill, my friend the merchant, that loves musique and comes to me a' Sundays, a most ingenious and sweet-natured and highly accomplished person." Subsequent reflection, however, brought home to Pepys the fact that his "ingenious friend" was hardly a suitable match for Mistress Betty, with her position and attractions, wherefore great was his wrath later when she espoused one John Creed, secretary to her uncle, Lord Sandwich, "who had the devilish presumption to aime at a lady so near my Lord." The union, however, allowed only after three years' opposition, was a happy one, and when at the end of thirty years Mistress Betty was left a widow, she continued to live in the neighbourhood of her old home, where it was her habit to set apart two days out of every week for social intercourse. On one day she was visited by "all the gentry and nobility" who resided near her, on the other she received and relieved all the afflicted and necessitous of whatever rank, giving them medicine, raiment, counsel, money or sympathy according to their needs.

And even to-day she remains silhouetted with curious insistence against the mists of time. Still she chats to us loquaciously from the walls of the church, where she used to worship in a gallery set apart from the common herd; and, indeed, there is this peculiarity

[*Cornelius Janssens pinxit*

LADY PICKERING,

Wife of Sir Gilbert Pickering, Bart., of Tichmarsh,
High Chamberlain to Oliver Cromwell.

(*née* Elizabeth Montagu, sister of the 1st Earl of Sandwich, and aunt to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.)

(*From a picture in the possession of the Marquis di Amodio.*)

about all the Pickering epitaphs, that they are less like conventional panegyrics of the deceased than friendly letters full of gossip and information. Thus Mistress Betty, in several lengthy tablets, tells us of her pride of birth and joy in the virtues of her relations; how they married into most honourable families, which she enumerates; how she was sorrowfully present at the death-bed of her cousin, Dryden, the poet; and finally, how in "the 80 yeare of my age" it is "with delight and humbel thankfulness that I reflect on the caracter of my pious anchesters."

To Dryden, indeed, the whole Pickering family of that day looked with awe and admiration, and he seems to have paid some pretty compliments to his relations. One day, after dinner at Mrs. Creed's, conversation turned upon the origin of names, and Dryden, bowing to the good old lady, spoke extempore some lengthy verses which formed a pretty play upon her name, and began thus:

> So much religion in *your* name doth dwell,
> Your soul must needs with piety excell.
> Thus names, like well-wrought pictures drawn of old,
> Their Owners' nature and their story told, etc.

This is at least more civil than the often-quoted, caustic epitaph, which few are aware was penned by Dryden on the death of his wife, née Lady Elizabeth Howard:

> Here lies my wyfe; here let her lie;
> She's now at rest; and so am I.

Meanwhile as I gazed round the grey old walls at Titchmarsh where those tablets made the voice of my far-away forbears seem so near and so alive, pretty Jane again summed up the situation.

"Oh, won't this place please you!" she said. "Why—it's full of the Family tabloids!"

Another house, in another county, where the chief interest centres round the same period of history, is Wentworth Wodehouse, of which I recently renewed my childish recollections, driving over there from Hickleton. The part of the vast building which naturally appeals most to the antiquarian is what Strafford used to call "my dear little wode house," and where he is still said to walk on Fridays with his head under his arm. There are letters extant in the house from Henrietta Maria to the man whom Charles deserted, begging him to get her money, and to another correspondent she remarks: "Strafford is not a handsome man, but he has beautiful hands." Turning from those days of long ago to our own times, we were told how the wonderful picture of the horse "Whistle Jacket" stirred the admiration of Belgian officers in the recent war. "Do let us stay here!" they used to beg, as they gazed at the lifelike representation of the beautiful beast.

When my mother was a girl there used to be a public day once a week at Wentworth, a dinner at which any strangers who so wished

might be present. One day, on entering the vast dining-room, it was found that the sole representative of the "Public Day" was a little commercial traveller who sat miserably at a table all by himself looking as if he wished the ground would open and swallow him up. This dinner always took place at five o'clock, and in olden times must have been a lengthy affair, for the legend runs that the great-grandfather of the present Lord Fitzwilliam used to go for a drive between the courses!

Hickleton itself is a spacious Georgian house, full of fine pictures, and priceless china, and surrounded by beautiful timbered grounds. In the garden are great beds of a brilliant rose called Écarlate, and Lord Halifax told me that one Christmas day several hundred blooms of these then growing out of doors were gathered to decorate the dinner-table. In the hall is framed a pathetic letter from Dick Turpin, who took refuge from inclement weather in a barn adjacent, and who wrote imploring the owner of the place not to give him up to justice. One of the portraits has also a tragic interest. It is of Lady Belvedere, a pretty blue-eyed girl, *née* Mary Molesworth, who for thirty years was kept a prisoner by her husband on account of an alleged intrigue, much after the fashion of George I and the unhappy Queen Sophia Dorothea of Celle. The church is only a few yards from the house, and in the lych-gate leading into the churchyard is a gruesome *memento mori*, three peculiarly repulsive skulls encased in glass, under which is written:

To-day for me.
To-morrow for thee.

Lord Halifax is an excellent host, and one of the most interesting raconteurs I have met. He has an inexhaustible store of experiences which extend over a long and interesting life, many of which are of considerable historical value. Among a number of stories which he told me, I recall his saying how on the occasion of some illness of the Prince Imperial, Dr. Fergusson was telegraphed for to go to Paris. He was received by the Emperor and the Empress privately and secretly, and asked to prescribe for the Prince. Incredible as it sounds, the Emperor and Empress were afraid of Prince Napoleon (Plon-Plon), and would, in consequence, trust no French doctor. Dr. Fergusson prescribed, and the prescription was made up under an assumed name at an English chemist's.

Another tale concerned Lord Harcourt (Lulu), who was very anxious to possess the picture of Harcourt, Archbishop of York, his ancestor, and begged the present Archbishop to let him buy it. The Archbishop protested that he feared it was not his private property to dispose of, as it must belong to the See. Later, the Archbishop went out to America, and one day, when talking to Pierpont Morgan, the latter said to him: "You must look at my

autograph collection. I have one letter from a predecessor of yours which may interest you." By an odd coincidence, the letter which he produced was from Harcourt, Archbishop of York, to the artist who had painted the picture, saying how delighted he was with the portrait and that it should never be removed from Bishopthorpe.

Another Yorkshire house which interested me on account of its associations with the past was Thorpe Hall, Bridlington. Surrounded by beautiful grounds in which flowers grow in apparently natural profusion, the building was painted a warm ochre colour, that it might appear to be bathed in perpetual sunshine. The romantic story connected with its owners will be recalled: how a son of Lord Macdonald of Sleat, riding idly through the village of Esher, saw a lovely girl playing battledore and shuttlecock by herself in a villa garden and forthwith fell in love with her despite the discovery that she was the reputed daughter of a dairyman; how, by and by, on paying his addresses to her, he was informed that the lovely Maria Louisa was in truth the daughter of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Almeria Carpenter, and how he finally eloped with her from school in the year 1799, and married her according to Scottish law. Some years afterwards the blow fell. He was misinformed that, owing to the fact that he held a commission in the English Army, he had forfeited his Scottish domicile, and that his marriage was therefore illegal till solemnized according to the law of the land to which he was now supposed to belong. Thus, although he promptly caused it to be solemnized in Norwich, at his death his second son succeeded him as 4th Lord Macdonald while the elder son, born before the English marriage, was disinherited. Not till three generations later was the case tried in the Scottish Courts, and the legitimacy of that elder branch established, by which the present Sir Alexander became 21st Chief of Sleat and Lord of the Isles—a title at one time considered prouder than that of the Kings of Scotland.

Not long after this had occurred we were staying at Thorpe when one evening Lady Macdonald told my husband that she had just sent up to Christie's a piece of china which had been brought into the family by Maria Louisa. It was an early Chelsea group by Roubiliac of a shepherd and shepherdess with an elaborate mayflower tree as a background. "We always disliked it," said Lady Macdonald, "and it lived on a shelf in the dark, so we thought we would get rid of it, and with the proceeds perhaps buy back a bit of Skye which Maria Louisa lost to us!" And she asked my husband what he considered such a group would be worth, taking into consideration the fact that the shepherdess had one of her fingers broken.

"I should say about a thousand guineas," my husband replied, much to her surprise; and the next morning there arrived a note from Christie's stating that they thought very highly of the group

and considered that a reserve should be put on it of a thousand guineas.

On the eventful day of the auction we repaired to Christie's to start the bidding with Godfrey Macdonald of the Isles and his sister, and great was the excitement as the offers rose rapidly till they reached the unprecedented sum of £1,820. We wrung each other's hands in warm congratulation, and Godfrey Macdonald exclaimed facetiously, "I think at *that* price I will throw in my false teeth!" to the immense appreciation of the dealers adjacent. The group was bought by Albert Amor, who sold it to Mrs. Salting, and she presented it to the London Museum, where it may now be seen, though the many hundreds who gaze at it annually are unaware of the romantic history attached to it.

At Thorpe the energy of each member of the family was remarkable. All were musical, all entertaining and all had a refreshing sense of humour. Whether they were getting up private theatricals, concerts or local entertainments, engineering, writing or playing some witty game, they brought a verve and an originality into all they did which was infectious. "How should you define Man?" asked Lady Macdonald recently, instructing the usually stolid young yokels. "The Thing a woman marries!" came the swift answer.

A house of interest to me, too, from its past associations, was beautiful St. Anne's Hill, above Chertsey, where my great-grandfather so often visited his friend, Charles James Fox. I never stayed there, but went over to tea with Sir Albert Rollit, a well-known figure about town with his sparse locks dyed to a curious ginger tint. He was most kind and showed me every corner of the place, with its many relics of Fox, subsequently taking me out into the beautiful garden. Unfortunately, at that time he was suffering from a stiffness in the joints which made his progress very slow. By the aid of a stick he walked a few paces, then paused to rest and talk, then moved slowly on again. At this rate the inspection seemed likely to prove interminable, and I was becoming anxious, as I had friends waiting in Chertsey for me to motor them back to London, when he came to a standstill and remarked proudly: "You might not believe it, but walking like this, going up one path and down another, one can traverse a distance of *seventeen and a half miles in this garden*!" Thereat I took the bit into my teeth and fled, or I have an impression I should be walking there still.

A place likewise full of interesting links with the past is Hartwell House, Bucks, where we stayed several times with Lord and Lady Leith of Fyvie, to whom it is now let. It lies two miles from Aylesbury, and for many centuries it has been the home of the Lees. Built of grey stone, half is Elizabethan, *circa* 1600; the other half was erected by Adam in 1750. Curiously, the two styles blend not inharmoniously, while within, three things are specially to be remarked—the fine long gallery, the walls of which are covered

with Flemish tapestry; the oriel windows, commanding lovely views of the park and lake; and the splendid oak staircase, the newel posts of which are surmounted from the lowest flight to the topmost by oaken figures of warriors in armour carrying lances or swords. Thereby hangs a tale.

Louis XVIII and his queen, on quitting France, came to England and resided first of all at Gosfield Hall, Essex, for two years, and then went on to Hartwell House, where they lived for five years. Queen Amélie eventually died in what is now Lady Leith's bedroom. She used to drink heavily, and when "under the influence" was terrified by the carved figures on the staircase as she went up to bed. These, therefore, had to be removed and hidden in the cellar, till such time as more sober occupants could bear the sight of them!

There are many relics of the French royal family still in the house. My husband and I had the bedroom and dressing-room which the Duc and Duchesse d'Angoulême occupied for five years, and their names are still on the doors. There is a fine library, which the Queen used as a reception-room in preference to the drawing-room, and from one of the side windows of the dining-room Louis XVIII saw a mounted messenger wearing the white cockade galloping across the Park bearing the welcome news of the abdication of Napoleon and his own recall to the throne of his ancestors. In the same room is the sedan-chair in which the Archbishop of Paris used to sit to hear the confessions of the exiled King and Queen, while above it, as though still listening to the royal delinquencies, hangs the portrait of the Archbishop himself, plump and debonair.

During the residence of Louis XVIII it was necessary to house so many *émigrés* that it was difficult to contrive accommodation for them. At one time there are said to have been hundreds resident in the house, so many of the unfortunate nobles had flocked to their king. The only way they could all be lodged was by partitioning the Long Gallery into cubicles, with a portion of it left down the length of the room to be used as a passage.

At Park Place, on the beautiful hills above Henley, we paid many pleasant visits. The Nobles were noted for their lavish hospitality, their cook was as famous as was Lady Holland's; and for many years their black gondola, propelled by a picturesque Venetian gondolier, was a feature of the river. In a great cage before the house Mrs. Noble had a wonderful aviary of over a thousand birds, and the weird tones of the Laughing Jackass used to be heard at intervals through the short summer nights. Our hostess had also a curious collection of silver pepper-pots of which many hundreds had been presented to her by friends, and selections from which were arranged before her nightly on the dinner-table, each night in a different pattern.

The grounds surrounding the house were peculiarly lovely, and

never failed to conjure up visions of those who had trod them during the passing years—of Frederick, Prince of Wales, hawking upon the heights; of Sir William and beautiful Lady Hamilton strolling along the paths; of Pitt, Canning, the silent poet Gray, the gentle sculptress Mrs. Dawson Damer, the eccentric Lady Mary Coke, the vivacious blue-stocking Mrs. Montague, and, above all, of Horace Walpole and his beloved "wives," the Misses Berry, while, like a faint, sweet scent of lavender, came the thought of poor Miss Mary Berry's ill-fated little romance, when, under an ancient mulberry tree on the lawn, General O'Hara proposed to her only to leave her for ever with a broken heart. In later times, Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, had been anxious to emulate his ancestor Frederick and become the owner of Park Place; but Queen Victoria would not hear of it. It was dangerously near London, she said.

Lea Castle, in Worcestershire, although dating only from the middle of the eighteenth century, is said to have passed to the present line of owners in a fashion picturesquely mediæval, for not long after it was built it was staked during a game of cards by the then possessor, Mr. Knight, and lost to his neighbour, the ancestor of the present owner. It is also one of the many houses where the ghost of a butler who hanged himself is still said to haunt the scene of his former duties. This conscientious spectre was supposed to run along the passage past my room in one of the towers jangling glasses on a tray, but I never heard him. My host, however, told me one day what haunted me more effectually—the true origin of a tale which I had hoped was fictitious.

A friend of his, an officer who was quartered in India, was much annoyed because his wife had a foolish horror of snakes, so much so that she lived in constant dread of even the most harmless reptiles, while the sight of a dead snake sufficed to make her hysterical with fear. He felt it necessary to cure her of this, so one day he killed a snake and hung its dead body over the looking-glass of her dressing-table. She protested that she could not go to bed with the horrible thing there; but he insisted that she must conquer her foolish repugnance to it and sleep with it in her room. That evening the unfortunate lady went off to bed with great reluctance, while her husband remained smoking with a couple of officers who had been dining with them.

Not long after she had retired, piercing screams were heard through the house, and one of the officers tried to persuade the husband to go to see what was the matter. "It is only hysteria," he replied. "She must be made to conquer this nonsense or she will never have any peace of mind. A dead snake can harm no one."

The agonized shrieks continued for a time while his friends implored him vainly to go to his wife; then the sounds ceased

abruptly and were succeeded by complete silence. "Well, I could not sit quietly here and leave a woman to shriek herself into a fit!" remarked one of the officers indignantly, and at length, thus urged, the husband went leisurely to satisfy himself that all was well. What was his horror to find his wife lying dead in the bed, and on the pillow beside her was a living snake. What had occurred was at once apparent to the unhappy man. The mate of the snake he had killed had, as is often the sequel, followed the trail of its murdered companion, and had wreaked its vengeance upon the human being it found near the body.

Another tale which I heard about this time had all the horror of a yarn by Edgar Allan Poe. It was told to me first-hand.

An Englishman travelling in Spain a few years ago happened one evening to saunter into an old church adjacent to a monastery where an aged sacristan was going round attending to the candles and generally setting things in order for the night. The visitor, greatly interested in the architecture and monuments of the ancient building, failed to notice when the sacristan left the church. Later, therefore, he hastened to the door to find it locked, and discovered, to his dismay, that he was imprisoned for the night. It being impossible to make his exit by any side entrance, he resigned himself to the inevitable, and after settling himself as comfortably as possible in a seat in a dim side-chapel, he fell asleep.

It was past midnight when he was awakened by a sound of voices chanting solemnly, and opened his eyes to see a long procession of monks filing into the church. They carried lighted tapers, and as they wound slowly up the dim aisle, by the fantastic light he descried in their midst a prisoner firmly held, a woman in a nun's dress. Her arms were tightly bound, and a long scarf or gag was wound about her mouth.

Filled with curiosity, the Englishman, from the seclusion of the chapel, watched the proceedings unseen. Arrived before the altar, the monks forced their captive to her knees, and proceeded to hold a service, chanting what sounded like a solemn requiem. At its conclusion, two of them came forward and, lifting a ring in the pavement, they raised a trap-door, and next seizing the unfortunate nun, proceeded to drag her towards the cavity thus disclosed. In her desperate struggles the gag round the mouth of the unhappy woman became displaced, and shriek after shriek came from her as she frantically begged for mercy. Her cries, however, were soon stifled, she was dragged relentlessly to the trap-door and precipitated down it, then bucket after bucket of what was presumably quicklime was swiftly emptied down after her. This accomplished, the trap-door was replaced, and the monks filed slowly out of the church, locking the great door after them.

The man who had been frozen with horror at the sight he had seen, but who had recognized the futility of interference single-

handed against such numbers, now came out from his hiding-place, and, rushing to the trap-door, tried to pull it up. It was of great weight, but he at length succeeded and peered down anxiously into the black depths beneath. He could hear no sound, and though he called repeatedly, there was no reply; so at last concluding that the unfortunate victim was beyond all human aid, he replaced the door, and, returning to his former place of concealment, waited, in no very enviable frame of mind, for the morning. With the coming of daylight the sacristan returned to the church, and he succeeded in slipping out unnoticed.

He went at once to a member of the Government and related what he had seen. The man listened attentively.

"If what you have witnessed is true," he said, "I have only one word of advice to you. Your life is not worth an hour's purchase. You must be out of Spain and over the frontier within twenty-four hours."

Another curiously creepy story was told to me by Lord Halifax, and is embodied in the following letter to him.

DOVER STREET,
28th July, 1910.

I really must tell you a most extraordinary story which I have just this moment heard, and now put down before I forget any of the details.

I was sitting at the Club after dinner smoking a cigarette and drinking my coffee, when a friend of mine whom I had not seen for some time came up and began to talk to me on various subjects, and at length said that he had experienced a most singular adventure.

It appears that last Sunday he went down to Eastbourne to stay with some friends for the week-end hoping to get a little bit of fresh air and recuperate generally after a period of somewhat severe work during which time he had been suffering a good deal from sleeplessness. On the Saturday evening when he arrived he found a cheerful party and congratulated himself upon having been able to get away from London.

Before going up to dress for dinner his attention was attracted by the behaviour of a large black cat which rushed forward upon his coming into the hall and began to display violent signs of affection, rubbing itself against his leg and attempting to climb up to his shoulders. This struck my friend as being both singular and, at any rate to him, strangely repulsive, as he had always entertained a repugnance for cats. However, as the animal seemed to have entirely devoted

itself to him, he allowed it to follow him upstairs, but shut the door against it on reaching the bedroom.

When he went down to dinner, the cat was still outside the door, and followed him into the dining-room, where its apparent devotion was the subject of much chaff. The same performance was repeated at bedtime, and again the cat was left outside the door of the bedroom. During the whole of Sunday the cat maintained its original behaviour, continuing what became most desperate attempts to climb up apparently to my friend's neck.

On Sunday evening when he went to bed, he had to resort to force to prevent the cat from following him into his bedroom. Benefiting doubtless by the sea-air and quiet surroundings, he at once fell into a deep and dreamless sleep, a thing which he had not done for many weeks.

He was awakened very gradually by a curious drawn feeling on one side which he described as if he felt he was breathing only on one side of his body. At the same time, he experienced a feeling of faintness and langour which tempted him to turn over and go to sleep again ; but a sharp, pricking sensation over his heart caused him to place his hand to his side, where he felt something warm and furry. He started up, and found the cat pressed closely against him, with its head buried under his arm, and the whole side of his night-shirt drenched with blood. He sprang out of bed, and said something to the cat, which at once stopped purring, came to the end of the bed, and began to spit and curse at him with as much hatred now as it had displayed affection before. Needless to say, it was the work of a moment to throw the beast out of the room.

What had happened was this : my friend had given instructions to be called early, as he wished to catch a train ; but the footman, mistaking the time, had called him an hour too soon, at six o'clock ; and when opening the door, he remembered having let the cat in, and having been unable to get it out again. It was at 7.30 that my friend awoke, so the cat had had about an hour and a half in which it had managed to suck quite a quantity of blood. All the skin on his left side was furrowed up and down, leaving exact marks of the animal's tongue.

Is not this an extremely unpleasant experience ? and the fact that the cat must at once have discovered some horrible affinity in my friend's disposition or temperament —or whatever you like to call it—renders his story all the more ghastly. Two doctors to whom he went on arriving in London were able to reassure him as regards the actual

healthiness of the wound, and dispel any fears that he could not help but entertain of the sanity of the cat.

I was so thrilled myself by the story of this Vampire cat that I determined to write it to you, using as far as possible the actual words of the story as told to me.

In contrast to the above I recall a story of a cat of more genial proclivities, told to me by Colonel Strange, of the Victoria and Albert Museum. He had a mummified Egyptian cat which he put up on a shelf. One day his own tabby sprang up to this mummy, took it by the neck and jumped down with it in its mouth, then sat beside it, patting it and playing with it, apparently cognizant that it had once been a cat like itself, but oblivious of the fact that it was

" Cold, cold as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago. . . ."

Perhaps I may cap both tales by one which may have annoyed or thrilled Dr. Johnson. A friend of mine, Mr. Spiers Matthews Hughes, owns a copy of Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake* which once belonged to Mrs. Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale), and is annotated in her own handwriting. This lady, in the latter years of her life, lived near St. Asaph, which was in the neighbourhood of Plas Hysfaon, the residence of Mr. Hughes's great-grandmother, Mrs. Matthews—hence the explanation of the fact that the volume was presented to Mrs. Thrale's neighbour. One of the annotations by Mrs. Thrale has reference to the notes on Canto Four, which describe certain superstitions connected with cats, and it runs as follows :

" I am a reader who heard Doctor Johnson say that a Mr. Kirwan told him once (meaning to be believed) how he was riding through a wood in Ireland, and that a *large Cat* called to him and said ' Kirwan, tell Audrey when thou goest home that Margery is dead.' At his return he told the adventure to his family, when up started his own tabby favourite from the fireside, saying, ' Ay, ay, is Margery dead ? Why, then, I am Queen of the Cats ! ' and from that instant he never saw the Creature any more ! "

One wishes that Boswell could have added Dr. Johnson's voluminous comments on this yarn !

CHAPTER XV

Tales Canny and Uncanny

GLANCING back at the previous chapters, I am surprised to find how involuntarily tales of the uncanny have crept into my pages. The fact is that the old houses of England—still more those of Scotland—are replete with ghostly legends which accentuate their mediævalism, and moreover there are few people, however unimaginative, who do not feel a peculiar charm in tales which are mysterious or blood-curdling. Amid the prosaic life of to-day, beneath the cold scrutiny of scientific investigation and increasing rationalism, the so-called Supernatural, of its very incongruity, has a fascination all its own. Perhaps it seems as though some vanishing element of romance may yet be recaptured in that cult of the Inexplicable.

Possibly my own scepticism in regard to such occurrences may lend an added flavour to certain yarns of this description which, owing primarily to their appeal to the imagination, I find I have recorded. There are indeed few of my acquaintance who at some period of their lives have not had an experience which baffles explanation ; and even allowing for the tendency to embroider which animates a narrator of the marvellous, such incidents, as Camille Flammarion has recently shown, proffer food for interesting speculation.

I have previously referred to certain instances of apparent clairvoyance in dreams. Two curious stories in this connection came under my immediate notice.

At an afternoon party one day there appeared a lady who was wearing a very fine necklace of coral. So peculiar was the colour of the beads, so vivid yet soft, and so totally unlike any ordinary coral, that their beauty was remarked upon by those present, and the wearer replying that a curious story was attached to them, proceeded to relate the strange manner in which they had come into her possession.

She was a Hungarian who had married an Englishman, and some years previously, when she and her husband were out in the colonies, her father died. There was a good deal of business to be settled in regard to his estate and the money she was to inherit, and the journey being such a long one, her husband decided to go to Hungary in her stead. He had never been in that country before, and went to stay with her brother in an old castle in the country.

On arriving at his destination, he was accorded a hospitable welcome. His host was a genial and agreeable man, and when they retired for the night, he was taken to a comfortable roomy apartment, where, being weary with his journey, he was soon in a profound sleep.

In the morning his host made the usual conventional inquiries concerning what manner of night his guest had passed, and whether he had found his bed comfortable ; to all of which the guest answered in the affirmative.

" I had," he explained, " an excellent night, except that I was bothered by a curious dream which was so real that it made a great and painful impression upon me. I dreamed that I was in the long stone passage downstairs, and that at a particular spot in the wall I discovered there was a hollow place. We opened it and found some human bones. I saw it all so clearly that I cannot get it out of my head."

His host was much amused. " I am quite certain that there is no hollow place in the wall," he said, " and there is no story connected with this house which would lead one to imagine such a thing possible. But if you really feel interested in the matter, we can go to the passage and tap the wall ; and if you find that anywhere it is not solid, you have my full permission to investigate the spot thoroughly."

Accordingly, after breakfast, the visitor and his host repaired to the passage in question, and began jestingly to tap the wall carefully. As they went slowly along, everywhere it sounded solid beneath their touch till at last they came to a place where it gave a different and a hollow sound. In considerable excitement, they fetched pickaxes, and in due course they disclosed the skeleton of a woman walled up in a niche and wearing the wonderful necklace of coral round her neck. The bones were carefully collected and given Christian burial ; but who the unfortunate victim was, or why she had so perished, no one could discover. There was no legend connected with the place nor any clue by which her identity could be established ; and save for the inexplicable occurrence of a complete stranger coming to the house and dreaming this remarkable dream, the bones would never have been discovered.

The necklace was held to be the property of the man who had been thus strangely instrumental in restoring it to the outer world, and his wife constantly wore it. She said that she had tried all over Florence, Rome, Paris and London to match the colour of the coral for earrings ; but she added, pointing to the pair she was wearing, " You will see that I have not been very successful—these are the best I could find." The earrings were very fine coral, but were not to be compared in beauty of colouring to the lovely necklace. Apparently the fact of the beads being kept from the air and

[*Constance Phillott pinxit*, 1922.

The Ghost.

When I was dead my spirit turned
To seek the much-frequented house:
I passed the door and saw my friends
Feasting beneath green orange boughs.
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
For each was loved of each.

. . . . . .

I passed from the familiar room,
I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest
That tarriest but a day.

C. Rossetti.

light for so long had produced some curious result upon them and they were unlike any procurable elsewhere.

The other tale, which can more readily be ascribed to coincidence, is as follows.

A few years ago a young nurse left a hospital where she was employed, saying that she would return in the evening; she did not reappear, and for months a fruitless search for her was continued. Two strange points connected with this are authentic. On the evening of the day when she was first missing, some friends whom she often visited at Richmond heard in the garden below a peculiar whistle which she always gave as a signal when she visited them. They rushed down to greet her, but to their amazement could find no trace of her, and it was afterwards established that her death must have occurred before that hour.

The second incident took place after a reward had been promised to anyone who could give authentic information respecting her fate. My sister-in-law was then living at Richmond when a friend came to her and said that he had dreamed that the body was found in a particular railed-in plantation in Richmond Park. So vivid was the impression created on him by this dream that he told her how, when walking in the park one day with another man he suggested that they should climb the railings and investigate. "I dreamed the body was lying just here, not far in, among the undergrowth," he said to his companion; "I don't like to go alone, but if you will come with me I should like to satisfy myself that it is not there." His friend refused, however, saying that if one of the keepers saw them trespassing they would get into trouble, so reluctantly he gave up the idea. A few weeks afterwards some children who were hunting for nuts ventured into the plantation, and found the body in the exact spot where he had dreamed it was lying.

Tales of prognostication during sleep are also frequent, and there are certain picturesque stories which have become historic on account of their connection with public events.

One of these, often referred to, was the dream of President Lincoln before his assassination. Lord Charnwood, among other writers, states that it was a dream which previously had presaged good fortune; but the following account given to me by Lord Halifax, puts a more ominous aspect on the President's interpretation of it.

"Mr. Charles Dickens, as we know, went on a tour in America, and, among other places, he visited Washington, where he paid a visit to his friend Mr. Sumner. After talking of various matters, Mr. Sumner said to Mr. Dickens: 'I hope that you have seen everybody and everything that you wished to see—that there is no wish of yours unfulfilled?' 'Well,' responded Mr. Dickens,

'there is one person I do much wish to make acquaintance with, and that is Mr. Staunton.' 'Oh, that is very easily managed, was the reply, 'for Mr. Staunton is a great friend of mine; come and meet him here.'

"Shortly afterwards the meeting took place, and much conversation passed between the two men. Just before they separated, towards midnight, Mr. Staunton turned to Mr. Sumner and said: 'I should like to tell Mr. Dickens that story about the President.' 'Well,' said Mr. Sumner, 'the time is very suitable!' and Mr. Sumner proceeded as follows:

"'During the war, as you know, I was in charge of all the troops in Columbia, and as you may imagine I had my hands pretty full. One day there was a Council ordered for two o'clock; but I was pressed with business and could not get there till twenty-minutes past. When I entered, my colleagues mostly looked rather grave, but I thought nothing of that, nor did I of the words which fell from the President when I entered: "*But gentlemen, this is not business.* Here is Mr. Staunton!"

"'Business then proceeded, various matters were discussed and settled, and the Council broke up. I subsequently walked away with the Attorney-General, saying to him as I left: "Well, we really *have* done some work to-day; the President really did apply himself to business instead of flitting about from one chair to another talking to this and that man!"

"'"Ah, but," said the Attorney-General, "you were not here at the beginning—you do not know what passed. When we entered the Council Chamber to-day, we found the President seated at the top of the table, with his face buried between his hands. Presently he raised it and we saw he looked grave and worn. He said: 'Gentlemen, before long you will have important news.' —'What, sir?' we asked, 'have you heard bad news, or anything important?' He said: '*I have heard nothing—had no news—but you will hear something to-morrow!*'

"'"We again pressed him for some explanation, and he said at last—'I have had a dream; I have dreamt it three times, once before the Battle of Bull Run, once on another occasion, and again last night. I am in a boat, alone—on a boundless ocean . . . I have no oars . . . no rudder . . . I am helpless . . . I drift! I drift! I drift!'"

"'Five hours afterwards, the President was assassinated!'"

Another very interesting incident Lord Halifax wrote down on May 24, 1890.

"Dr. Grantham has just been in and has been gossiping with me. Among other things he told me this story, which struck me so much that I am sitting down to write it at once, in order to be

sure of recollecting it accurately . . . He has only this instant left the house.

"Some years ago a Mr. Freeland was staying in Madeira. He was very unwell, and as a ball was going to be given in the hotel where he was lodging, Dr. Grantham said: 'You come up to my house and stay with me.'

"A day or two after Mr. Freeland's arrival, Dr. Grantham came in late one evening and found him sitting with Mrs. Grantham before the fire. 'My dear fellow,' he exclaimed to the invalid, 'why are you not in bed? You ought to have been there long since!'

"'I could not possibly go to bed,' Mr. Freeland answered. 'I had such a dreadful dream last night—I cannot endure the thought of it. I dreamed someone was bringing in a dead body and putting it somewhere in this house!'

"'What an extraordinary thing!' was Dr. Grantham's reply. 'Not a soul knows anything about it—not even Mrs. Grantham; *but that is what I myself am going to do*!'

"'The fact was,' explained Dr. Grantham, 'that Professor Clifford, who was in the same island, was dying; and he had the greatest possible dislike to being taken to any Christian place of burial. I was attending him—he was a great friend of mine—and I said to him: "You need have no apprehension—I will take care that it doesn't happen. You don't want to be buried thus, and any Christian place of burial would rather not have you! So as soon as you are dead, I promise to take you to my house, and keep you there till you can be sent off to England in the steamer." 'Nobody in my house,' Dr. Grantham added, 'would have known anything about it—just an oblong packing-case would have been stored away in the basement, as soon as Mr. Freeland had made up his mind to go to bed. However, the latter left my house the next day and, under the circumstances, I did not encourage him to stop!

"'After what he said to me, however, I went straight off to Professor Clifford and told him there was a man in my house who had dreamt the very thing I had intended to do. Professor Clifford was extremely interested, and began to think of any reasons to account for Mr. Freeland's dream.

"'The next day, or the day after, he died; so perfectly conscious and clear-headed to the last that I said to him "You will be dead in a couple of hours, have you nothing you want to write? Are you quite contented? and are you sure that death means the end of everything, and that in an hour or two you will have ceased to exist?" Professor Clifford appeared perfectly satisfied on these points, and just before the end, being then unable to speak, he signed for writing materials, and wrote this sentence to be put on his tomb——

I was not; and was unconcerned.
I lived and did a little work.
I am not; and grieve not.'

"His body was subsequently stowed away in Dr. Grantham's house, as previously arranged, till it could be sent to England."

In regard to another curious tale derived from the same source, I may mention that the names of all concerned are known to me, although I am not at liberty to insert them here.

Lady G. had a wonderful gift of dreaming what afterwards came true. One night, in her sleep, she distinctly saw an old house which was quite unfamiliar to her, but she fancied that, accompanied by someone, she was visiting this house, and one special room impressed itself on her mind. First, she observed there was a very curious frieze near the ceiling, then that the latticed windows were very peculiar in their long narrow shape and were ornamented by a striking moulding.

In her dream she saw an elderly woman sitting hunched up in an arm-chair by the fire; then her attention wandered from the woman and became fixed on a door which was softly opening, and she saw a man enter, steal up quickly to the sleeping female figure, suddenly produce a pistol, place it close to her temple, and fire. When his victim fell over, the murderer tried to arrange the pistol as though it had fallen from her hand, after which he noiselessly left the room, shutting the door behind him. Only a few moments later, however, he reappeared, and made further alterations in the position of the dead woman and the pistol. Lady G. saw the face of the murderer very plainly, and it remained riveted on her memory.

Time passed; she and her husband wished to rent a house and inspected various properties. Amongst others they visited an old Manor in Cheshire. The moment Lady G. entered the hall she felt the place was familiar to her, and then it flashed across her. "I have never been here in my life, but it is the house I saw in that horrible dream."

The caretaker was speaking at the moment: "This door on the right leads into the drawing-room," on which Lady G. corrected her, saying: "I am sure it leads into the dining-room!" and the caretaker apologized as she replied: "Did I say drawing-room? I meant to say dining-room!" Then she opened the door, and Lady G. at once recognized the remarkable frieze, the latticed windows and peculiar moulding of the room she had seen in her dream. There was also a chair near the fireplace!

The caretaker, being asked about the house, said that the last tenants had not stayed very long, and the family before had been foreigners, she thought Austrians or Swiss. There were three of them, a gentleman, his wife and his mother-in-law. There

had been a sad tragedy in their time, because the old lady had committed suicide by shooting herself; and after this the husband and wife had gone away to foreign parts, subsequently to which the house had first been shut up, and then it had been let.

Lady G. did not take the house, but some months later as she was walking down Regent's Street idly looking in at the shop windows she was brought to an abrupt pause before the Stereoscopic Company by the sight of a photograph. "Why, there is the likeness of the murderer in my dream!" was her thought, and she promptly went into the shop and asked who was the original of the photograph. It was de Tourville, who was being tried for the murder of his second wife in the Tyrol!

The story of the attempted execution at Exeter of John Lee in 1885, and of his curious dream previous to the event, is perhaps well-known, but I have seen original documents connected with the case which make it of peculiar interest. The facts are briefly as follows. On November 15, 1884, Miss Keyse, an elderly lady, was found to have been mysteriously murdered in her house at Babbacombe, Torquay. Her butler was tried for the crime, convicted and sentenced to death at Exeter on January 4, 1885. On the 23rd of February he was brought out for execution in Exeter Gaol. The rope was adjusted, the burial service commenced, and the signal given; but the drop would not act. This was repeated three times, and at the end of half an hour it was decided not to renew the attempt.

Now the drop was contrived by two doors secured underneath by a bolt. The prisoner was made to stand with a foot on each door, and on the bolt being withdrawn the doors would naturally fall down apart.

The drop had been tried five times and had answered without a hitch on the Saturday previous to the date fixed for the execution; twice it was tested in the actual presence of the Executioner, who expressed himself entirely satisfied with it. It was again tried after the attempted execution, but without any weight on the scaffold, when it also acted successfully. On the occasion of the attempted execution, each successive time *the bolt could not be withdrawn from the socket or moved more than an eighth of an inch.* But the remarkable part was the clear evidence that before this happened John Lee had dreamed every detail of the occurrence.

Lord Clinton was staying with Lord Halifax at Powderham in the beginning of April, 1885, being then in the Chair at the Quarter Sessions, and he secured for his host incontestable proof of the truth of this fact. The first statement is given by the Rev. J. Pilkin, Chaplain, in a letter to Lord Clinton.

H. M. Prison, Exeter.
April 8th, 1885.

My Lord,—

The following are the particulars of the dream of John Lee, which your Lordship has requested me to supply.

After the attempted execution in February, 1885, I went to John Lee's cell, and spoke to him on the extraordinary event that had happened in his case; he replied by saying that he had dreamed last night that it would so happen.

At my request he related his dream.

He said that in it he saw that he was led from his cell down through the Reception Basement to the Scaffold, which was just outside the door of that basement.

He saw himself placed upon the scaffold, but it would not work.

He then saw himself led away from the place of execution as it was decided that a new scaffold must be built before the sentence of the law could be carried out. He then told me that he had mentioned the dream to the two officers who were in the cell with him when he awoke at 6 a.m.

The officers were not present when he told me this, nor had they been with him since the attempt was made. But they had in the meantime reported the dream to the Governor of the prison, to whom I had separately gone to make a similar statement of what had actually occurred.

I ought to add, my Lord, that John Lee did not attach any weight to the dream, but had fully believed up to the time of its fulfilment that he would be hanged; nor did he think of it while the attempts were being made. The force of the dream came to him after the semi-consciousness had passed away into which he had apparently lapsed during the attempts.

Now all this might be readily explained away by the supposition that John Lee imagined that he had dreamed prior to their occurrence events which had actually taken place before he was obsessed by this delusion; but this explanation is discounted by the separate testimony of the warders, which not only corroborated his assertion but which had been shown to the Governor *before its fulfilment.*

Statement of the warders who spent the night with John Lee previous to his (attempted) execution.

At 6 a.m. when the prisoner rose from his bed, he said, "Mr. Bennett, I have dreamed a very singular dream. I thought the time was come, and I was led down through the reception room out to the hanging place; but when they placed me on the drop they could not hang me, for there was some-

thing wrong about the machinery attached to the drop, and then they led me off from the drop and took me (instead of the way I came) around the A wing, and back through the ward to my cell."

He told me this in the presence of Mr. Milford, who had watched with me throughout the night.

Signed

SAMUEL BENNETT,
Assistant Warder.
JAMES MILFORD,
Superior Officer.

23rd Feburary, 1885.

A suitably picturesque conclusion to this story should have been that the innocence of John Lee was eventually established, and that his marvellous escape from execution constituted an obvious intervention of Providence on behalf of a guiltless man. Unfortunately things do not so happen in real life. John Lee was undoubtedly guilty; but in view of the ordeal which he had endured his sentence was subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life; and the strange occurrence which saved him from paying the penalty of his crime was another instance of the apparently erratic workings of a blind Fate which leaves the innocent to perish and intervenes on behalf of the undeserving.

But perhaps some of the most remarkable instances of dreams or visions which I have heard occurred to a friend whom I met staying at Lea Castle, Mrs. Witham, *née* Miss Olive Church, who was a niece of the then Rector of Kidderminster. All her life she had had strange experiences in this connection, but I prefer that she should relate the following in her own words:

"My first experience of anything unaccountable occurred when I was a child, and took place at St. George's Vicarage, Kidderminster. My father was King's Commissioner for Western Nigeria, and was then at Accra on the Gold Coast. We had not heard from him for some time, then one morning, just before dawn, I was awakened by my mother's voice saying 'When I say "*Look!*" you will see your father!' My mother had been dead for some years but the voice was distinct in my hearing. I sat up in bed and then heard the voice again saying '*Look!*' and my father was standing in my room in full uniform. I had never seen him in his official uniform in my life. I called out to him eagerly, fancying he had returned unexpectedly from abroad, but, even as I called, he disappeared.

"Two days later I received a letter from my brother Charles Church, who was then a small boy at a Preparatory School at Malvern Link, saying that a most curious thing had happened to him two days previously; before dawn he awoke and saw his

father, looking very ill, standing by his bedside. He spoke to the figure and it vanished. He cried out and was so terribly upset that the Prefect of the Dormitory came and sat by his bed until it was light.

"Later we received a cable from Sir M. Nathan, Governor of the Gold Coast, informing us that my father had been taken very ill with Blackwater fever and in consequence was put on board the first home-going ship as a slight chance of recovery, but he passed away four days out, and was buried at sea.

"The date of our 'dreams' was February 12, 1904, the day and hour he died.

"My next experience of seeing a vision of the dead occurred two or three nights after my marriage. I awoke and saw looking down at me a very tall, misty figure, with a face very like that of my husband. For a second I thought it *was* my husband, and then realizing there was something unusual in the figure at which I was gazing, I put out my hand to see if he was still in bed. To my surprise he at once spoke to me, wide awake, and inquired, 'Have you seen anyone?' I replied 'Yes—I thought it was you!' He answered: 'I did not speak for fear of startling you; *but that was my mother*! I saw her too; she seemed to have come to look at you!' His mother had been dead for many years!

"The last experience occurred in connection with my great friend Mr. X., a barrister, the brother of a well-known Admiral, whose name I do not give, as his relations might prefer that it should not be mentioned. He was a kind and most charming man, but had recently been very ill from a disease which had caused him untold suffering; his courage, however, was unparalleled, and his sympathy for others remained unfailing. I may add that no immediate fatal consequences of his illness were anticipated.

"He had given my small daughter a rag doll, made by his mother, which the child adored, till one afternoon she lost it from her perambulator, and returned home so broken-hearted that I wrote a line to him at the hotel in Baker Street where he was then staying for treatment, asking if another doll could possibly be made to comfort her. My letter was written at 6 o'clock on November 1st, 1918, and was posted at once.

"The next morning I was aroused from sleep to experience a most curious condition of semi-consciousness. My room seemed to be full of a most wonderful golden light; to describe it as sunshine would be misleading, it was a strange and beautiful radiance; and standing in it, close to the foot of my bed, was my friend Mr. X. The first thing which impressed itself upon me was that he was looking perfectly well and happy; all sign of suffering was entirely gone. He spoke to me a few sentences, and then stretching out his arms with a gesture of supreme joy, said: 'I am completely cured—I am quite well!' and was gone.

"I looked at the clock, it was some time between 6 and 6.30 a.m., and I told my husband my 'dream-experience.' It left me with an indescribable feeling of exaltation and peace, although I could not account for this.

"On November 11th, 1918, I received the doll I had asked for, accompanied by a letter from my friend's father written from their country place in Herts, saying that my letter to his son had been forwarded there, as his son had died from pneumonia after influenza, and his mother, not wishing my little girl to be disappointed, had made and sent another doll as I had requested.

"I pondered much whether I should tell my friend's father of my curious dream, as I had never met him, and I feared that such an incident, in itself so sacred, I should not like to be misunderstood, or its recapitulation regarded as an intrusion on a great grief. But at length a force, stronger than any personal consideration, prevailed, and I wrote an exact account of what had occurred and posted it to him.

"In reply I received a most kind and gracious answer as follows:

"'What you have told me is connected with something so curious that I think you ought to know it.

"'As your letter to my son was written on November 1, your dream was the following morning, and that was the very time (about 6.15 a.m., November 2nd) when he passed away.

"'He fell into a sleep the evening of the day before, and just before he went to sleep *he used exactly the same words to his mother which you heard him utter*, and they were the last words he spoke!'"

Mrs. Witham adds: "If any of my friend's family should read and recognize what I have told you, I hope they will understand that I have related it in all reverence as one of the most beautiful things I have to look back upon in this life's journey into the Unknown." I may add personally that I have seen the correspondence in question, and can add my testimony that, whatever interpretation may be put on the incident, the above account is entirely veracious.

Another dream related by Mrs. Witham, besides being fully authenticated, is both quaint and picturesque.

"I dreamed," she relates, "that I was driven up to a very old house, and entered an enormous hall. There I was greeted by an old lady with powdered hair, dressed in an old-fashioned gown of brocade, while in some curious way I knew that I had slipped back through the centuries and was living in a remote past. She was very charming, and herself conducted me up a wide staircase leading out of the hall. Half-way up, she drew aside a curtain, disclosing a door set cornerwise in the wall, and we entered one of the prettiest old-fashioned bedrooms it is possible to imagine.

"Every detail of the room impressed itself on my memory. The walls were oak-panelled; the floor was of polished oak. A

cosy fire blazing on the hearth was reflected brightly in the shining boards, and over the wide fireplace was a coat of arms painted on the oak in old and faded colours. But one thing which particularly arrested my attention was the bed of dark oak, as it was of a most peculiar shape, and was very like a large cradle suspended above the floor. It had hangings of some material on which was a pattern of roses; and at its head was a window with curtains to match. The only other window in the room, I noticed, had no curtains, it was long and narrow in shape, with small panes of glass, and had an old-fashioned catch.

"The little lady, a perfectly delightful vision of daintiness and charm, chatted to me for some time, and then said: 'Now, my dear, I am going to ask you to do something for me, and that is *to keep my window open!*' Then she pointed her finger at me, and wagging it impressively, repeated: '*Now remember, dear, be sure to keep this window open!*' and with that she left the room.

"I remember thinking when I awoke what a delightful dream it had been, every detail so real, and its whole atmosphere so old-world and attractive. At that time, however, my thoughts were very fully occupied with other matters, and it soon passed from my recollection. For one thing, I was very busy making preparations for leaving London, as I had just promised my friend, Violet Gibbons, to join an amateur company she was getting up to play in some theatricals for a charity, and for this purpose I was going to stay with some friends of hers, Sir William and Lady Guise, at Elmore Court, Gloucestershire. I did not know them personally, and had never seen the house where I was going.

"A day and a night passed; and on the second night, I dreamt the identical dream all over again, similar in the minutest detail! Astonished as I was to recall it when I awoke I mentioned it to no one. That day I was to leave for Gloucestershire; and that morning at breakfast my aunt, Lady Fairlie-Cuninghame, remarked that she had known Sir William Guise in old days, they had met at house-parties at the Duke of Bedford's, and my uncle added that there was some connection between our family and that of Lady Guise. I mention this because it may be considered of interest in view of what follows.

"In a very merry mood I departed that day, in November, 1913, and on a dark, misty evening arrived at Elmore Court. From what I could distinguish in the dusk, it was a fine old house, of ancient date, and we had tea in a beautiful old hall. After tea, Lady Guise offered to show me my room, and took me up the wide staircase till, half way up, she came to a door set cornerwise in the wall, and opening this, to my amazement she showed me into the exact counterpart of the room I had seen in my dream!

"There was the identical bed suspended above the floor, the shining boards reflecting the bright fire, the oak furniture, all in the

exact position in which I had seen it, also the painted coat of arms above the wide fireplace. Only one thing seemed different. The long narrow window with small panes which the old lady had pointed out to me was not visible. The wall was completely panelled, and a large wardrobe stood where I had seen it.

" The whole scene of my dream, indeed, came back to me vividly, and although not afraid, I felt it to be so uncanny that I must have shown it in my manner, for Violet Gibbons, who had followed us upstairs, came back to my room a few minutes later, and asked me why I had gone so pale. I replied that I would tell her another time.

" We passed a very merry evening dancing in the hall till late, and when we came up to bed, Miss Guise came with me. I could no longer resist the impulse to ask her what I was dying to know, and begged her to tell me if there had ever been a window in that room in the place I pointed out to her. Extremely surprised, she answered that there was a window there *now*, and I forthwith asked her to let me describe this window which I had never seen in real existence. I did so to her further amazement, and she acknowledged the description was correct. I then told her about my dream, and how I had found everything in the room I was occupying exactly as I had seen it twice in a dream before I entered the house, even to the curious bed, which was unlike anything I had ever come across, or could possibly have imagined. She replied that that she could well believe, for the bed was supposed to be unique, in fact—unless my memory misleads me—there was only one other in all England that was in the least like it.

" The next day I found that the family were very interested in this odd occurrence, and Sir William Guise at once took me round to the side of the house and showed me the window from the exterior. He told me that a predecessor of his had caused it to be closed and panelled over, together with other windows in the house, at the time of the window-tax.

" I may add that although I slept for many nights in the room where the little old lady of my dream must have lived, I never had any visit from her, nor did I see her again in my dreams ; but the eldest son told me that some day he hoped the window would be opened out again as she had apparently sent this message about it. For indeed it seemed as though the charming old dame had still an interest in earthly things and that when she visited her former home she was distressed to find this alteration in a room she had once loved, so strongly had she impressed upon me her mandate : ' Now, remember, dear, *keep* my window *open !* ' "

There was staying at Lea Castle during one of our visits a relation of our host, Mrs. De Courcy Daniell, with her two pretty daughters, Muriel and Adrey, the younger of whom is accredited with a gift of second sight.

Mrs. Daniell was at that date renting a house named Worthorpe Hall (pronounced Wurthup) near Stamford; and she wrote down for me the following story which is curious from its corroborating circumstances, and which there can be no harm in retailing since the alleged ghostly occurrences connected with it have since ceased.

"I have a servant named Thomas Craig, who has been with me over thirty years. He is an Irishman who hails from Belfast, though he insists on describing himself as a Scot and a Presbyterian! One day Craig came to me and told me that he had seen a man trespassing in the grounds for some days, that he had several times tried to catch the intruder, and that at last he had run him to earth in a young plantation where there was a very deep pool. 'And I hit him!' announced Craig.

"I remarked that I hoped it was hard, and asked what happened next.

"'Oh, nothing!' said Craig seriously—'for—*there wasn't anything there.* It's best not to tell the maids, as they would be frightened, but it was certainly a ghost!'

"I was about to tell him not to be ridiculous, when it flashed across my recollection that my cousin, Alice Erskine, who had lived in the neighbourhood for years, had spoken of errand boys being frightened by what she termed the 'headless Cavalier' who was to be seen walking up a road to our house which led to the stable-yard. I thereupon questioned Craig if he had noticed the man's face; but he replied that he was so busy looking at what he termed 'Moosoo's' odd high boots and long cloak, that he hadn't noticed what the man himself was like.

"Some days later, however, Craig came to me again and said: 'I have seen Moosoo and he has *no head.* He disappeared behind a tree close to the pond.'

"I subsequently noticed that our Bull-terrier was so frightened that he would not go down that path at night alone, and sometimes not even when my husband accompanied him; and often when I could see nothing myself I have noticed Adrey's black cat, with every hair on end, fly into the front door at night, all the while facing nervously towards that wooded part of the grounds. But beyond this, and the fact that Craig declared he often saw Moosoo, no one thought any more about it.

"One night we had a dance, and the cat Winkey was so upset by the preparations that he stayed out, and at 8.30 Adrey went out to look for him. As she passed through the room, I called out to her, 'Did you find Winkey?' 'No!' she answered, 'but I met the ghost among the trees! I saw him perfectly, but I wasn't the least frightened!'

"Although she has professed to see spooks from childhood, they never seem to alarm her; another time, however, this event would have made more impression upon her; but she was then far too

busy and too excited about the dance to trouble about ghosts. There were two balls after this with one night's interval; and the day after our own dance there arrived to stay with us Mr. Mockett, a young cousin who was a barrister, and his cousin, Captain Hovill, who was a gunner; neither had ever been to Worthorpe before, and knew nothing about the history of the place.

"Going into the drawing-room in the evening after their arrival, I found a merry party playing with an improvised planchette, for which a tumbler did service. Captain Hovill was writing down the letters, as the tumbler makes no pause at the end of a word. He laughed and said: 'Adrey says we have got on to a ghost here!' The thing at once spelt out: '*Don't laugh—this is no laughing matter!*' I was told to ask some questions—and here they are, with the answers given:

"'Who are you?'

"'I am Colonel Newton.'

"'Can we help you?'

"'No. I am bearing my punishment for betraying my king.'

"'What King?'

"'Charles the First. I betrayed the manœuvres of the loyalists to Cromwell at Worthorpe.' (Cromwell, after wrecking Crowland Abbey, stayed at the ruined Worthorpe House, which is two fields away from the site of the present building.)

"'Are you sorry?'

"'Yes. I lost my head in the service of his son.'

"'Do you like us?'

"'Yes. You are loyalists.'

"'Does Craig see you?'

"'He is Irish!'

"'Did Adrey see you?'

"'Yes, she is allowed to see us!'

"'Will Muriel see you?'

"'Yes, when she returns from Canada!' (There was then no idea that Muriel would ever go to Canada.)

"After this Mr. Mockett inquired: 'Shall I ever get to the top of the Tree?'

"'Yes, you will make a great name in India!' (He was furious and said he would rather die unknown here in England!)

"After this someone asked if the cavaliers would fight for King George V. The answer to this was 'No.' 'Why?' 'The End is at hand.' 'The end of the world?' 'Of that time knoweth no man!' came the reply.

"At that juncture, the door opened, and Craig came in—'*Moosoo is standing opposite the window under the big oak!*' he announced. But when we rushed to the window there was nothing there and from that time we never saw or heard of him again.

"A week after this, my husband and I went to tea with an

old Mrs. Noyes, who was over eighty. She had been born in Rutland, lived all her married life there, and died in Rutland the following year. Thinking it might amuse her, my husband told her the story of our so-called ghostly experiences. She listened attentively and then turned to her daughter and said : ' Bring me the family pedigree,' and there she pointed out to us a sentence which ran, ' Colonel Newton, promoted to honour by Cromwell *for services rendered.*'

" Later, some friends of ours who were much interested in the story and who knew many of the Professors at Cambridge consulted a great authority there upon the Charles period. He said that all essential details of the story coincided with history except that at the time that Colonel Newton had told us he was at Worthorpe he was stated to have been with Charles's army in Somerset. However, if he was out to betray his King he would probably endeavour to conceal his absence ! In any case this Colonel Newton, whose name we had never previously heard connected with Worthorpe, was a traitor to the cause of Charles, and in consequence lost his head, exactly as stated by planchette.

" The other details given proved to be equally correct, for Muriel unexpectedly went to Canada, and Mr. Mockett as unexpectedly went to India and has now a very important legal post in Madras."

Staying at the Castle at the same date was another relation of our host, Lady Tracey, who referred to the well-known story of the appearance of Admiral Tryon at his wife's party in London on the night he was drowned. Knowing that Admiral Tryon had been a friend of Admiral Sir Richard Tracey, I subsequently asked Lady Tracey to tell me what she knew about that classical incident.

The Honble Lady Tracey to Mrs. Stirling.

I promised to send you a little information about Sir George Tryon at the time of the loss of H.M.S. *Victoria.* He was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean Station, and the accident occurred on June 22nd, 1893, near Tripoli.

That night Lady Tryon gave a reception at her house in Eaton Place.

Some of the guests who were present at the party, and whom I met, asserted that they distinctly saw Sir George there !

The late Sir Gilbert Claughton was one of these.

Lady Tryon was asked why Sir George was in London and denied his being so ; she had not seen the apparition, and subsequently never liked it mentioned.

Sir George had passed away some hours before the reception was held, but the news of the disaster did not reach London till the early hours of the 23rd.

Appearances at the time of death—a phantasm of the dead produced on the brain of the living—are frequent, and again seem governed by some erratic law which it is impossible to fathom. For instance, in this case, Lady Tryon, the person most concerned in the tragedy which had been enacted, had no conception of it, while guests at her party to whom the event was comparatively unimportant, thus had unaccountably a vision of the dead Admiral mingling with the company in his house!

One of the most interesting stories in this connection was told to me by Captain Stanley-Musgrave. I was asking him if he had ever seen anything for which he could not account, and he replied: "I have never *seen* anything, but I had an odd experience once, as follows:

"I went to stay in the Midlands with a friend for some hunting. We had a very good day, came home tired, and had an excellent dinner. In the evening as we were sitting together in my friend's snuggery, I noticed that he rose up, went through the form of shaking hands with someone, and, reseating himself, appeared to be carrying on a one-sided conversation. I was very surprised, but thought it no business of mine if he liked to play the fool, so I pretended to take no notice; and soon I saw him rise up again, open the door, and go through the form of showing someone out. Then he came back and stood by the fire.

"'How did you think Colonel Y. was looking?' he asked.

"'Colonel Y.?' I repeated. 'I haven't seen him. Surely he is in India?'

"'Not *seen* him!' echoed my host. 'But he was here just now—you saw him talking to me!'

"'I heard you talking, certainly,' I replied dryly, 'but there was no one else in the room.'

"'How can you say that, when he was here this moment, sitting beside me!'

"I could see that he was genuinely angry, and I was angry myself, for his behaviour was incomprehensible. Eventually we went up to bed, mutually ruffled and mystified.

"The following morning at breakfast, a telegram arrived, and as my friend read it, I saw him change countenance. After a pause he handed it to me. 'What do you make of that?' he asked. It was a telegram to announce the death in India of the man whom he believed he had been talking to the previous evening in England, and allowing for the difference in time, Colonel Y. must have died at the time when my friend fancied he saw him in the room with us!"

Lady Stuart Hogg told me that as a girl she used often to stay with Mrs. Bigland, who had a house in the North, and her hostess one day had the following curious experience.

Her husband had gone out for his daily ride one afternoon, when not long after he had started she was surprised to see him return. He came into the room where she was sitting in broad daylight and silently beckoned to her. Thinking he had something to show her, she at once rose and followed him. He preceded her into the garden, then down the carriage drive, and next, at the gate at the end of the drive, he suddenly disappeared. Thinking he must be playing her some trick, she waited for him to reappear, but he did not do so, and at length she returned to the house, much puzzled by his unwonted behaviour.

Not long afterwards, his riderless horse appeared at the door, and a prolonged search at length led to the discovery of his dead body lying by the roadside. Thus we are confronted by an instance of a lady who, experiencing no uneasiness about her husband which could account for any hallucination on her part, yet saw a vision of the dead man, in broad daylight, and even accompanied that apparition out of doors in a walk through the garden!

Another curious tale is that of Dr. Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester. He had always wanted to see Wooton, Mr. Evelyn's place, not far from Guildford, being anxious among other things to see the portrait of Mrs. Godolphin, whose Life he had written in his early days. Owing to his busy existence, however, his wish remained unfulfilled.

One day Mr. Evelyn, Mr. Harvey (a doctor), and a brother of Mr. Evelyn were sitting in the dining-room at Wooton when someone said: "Why—there is the Bishop of Winchester looking in at the window!" They hastened to the window, and all saw a figure which disappeared. They went out into the grounds to see if there was anyone there, but could find nobody.

Half an hour afterwards, a servant came in with news of the Bishop's death. He had been killed when out riding with Lord Granville about two miles from Wooton, when on his way to stay at Holmbury, where Lord Granville was living.

An interesting ghost-story of long ago, which received confirmation many years afterwards, is the following.

George William Frederick, 6th Duke of Leeds, married Lady Charlotte Townshend, daughter of George, 1st Marquis Townshend. Their son, Lord Conyers Osborne, born May 6, 1812, was at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1831.

Lady James Townshend, whose husband was brother to the Duchess of Leeds, was sitting in her boudoir one evening when the door opened and she saw Lord Conyers walk through the room in a dressing-gown she had embroidered for him. He did not look at her nor speak to her, and, considerably surprised, she rang the bell and asked: "When did Lord Conyers arrive?" The butler answered,

"Lord Conyers has not arrived, my lady!" and seemed much astonished at the question; in fact, he ventured to hint that Lady James had been asleep and dreaming.

Lady James, however, was so impressed by the reality of what she had seen, that before going to bed that night *she wrote to Lord James to tell him all about it.*

The next day Lord Conyers' servant arrived from Oxford and begged to see Lady James, whom he requested to break to the Duchess of Leeds the news that he had brought, as he did not dare do so himself. Lord Conyers had been killed on the previous day, February 19, 1831, wrestling with Lord Downshire at Christ Church.

Lord James died in 1842, and after his death Mrs. George Portal was reading over and tearing up old letters with her aunt, Lady James, when among a bundle of papers given to her by the latter to destroy she found the identical letter which Lady James had written to her husband eleven years before, in which she described Lord Conyers' mysterious appearance to her, *the letter being written the day before the messenger had arrived from Oxford with the tidings of his death!*

The following story is unusual in that no vision of the dead took place; it furnishes only an instance of apparent "clairaudience." Still more, this came erratically to one not closely related to the deceased lady, who was not thinking about her at the time of the incident, and who, above all, had never been in the habit of hearing her spoken of by the Christian name employed. Unfortunately, I am asked not to mention the real surnames of those concerned; but all names and particulars have been given to me in writing.

Miss Alice Wharton, as we will call her, states that about the year 1908 she lost a sister, Miss Fanny Wharton, who lived in Edinburgh with another sister called Essie. Stress must be laid on the fact that the sister who died was always known as Fanny, although personally she preferred her real name, Frances, so that she begged a few intimate friends to call her that; but by the rest of the world and by all her relations she was never called anything but Fanny.

A niece of hers, Ina, used to stay with the Grey Ladies at Hampstead and work with them, but was not with them when the following event happened.

On January 11, 1909, Miss R., one of the Grey Ladies, suddenly felt someone near her and heard the words: "Cold . . . lonely. . . ." The voice sounded not so much actively unhappy as intensely dreary and depressed. She asked, "Who is there?" and the reply was audible: "*Frances* Wharton. Is it Ina?"

Miss R. explained that Ina was in Italy, and the voice was audible again: "Who are you?"

Miss R. again explained, and the reply came: "I don't know

where I am. I suppose I've died. I can't find Essie—where is she ? "

Miss R. replied that Essie was in Madeira, and the next remark, which was not at all distinct, was: " Yes—we were there together once." Then the voice added: " I have been to Edinburgh to look for her—but where am *I* ? I thought one went to quite a different place, but I am in the world still. Can I talk to Essie or Ina ? " . . . She said a good deal more, but very indistinctly.

Miss R. suggested that she should try to communicate with her relations while they were asleep, and asked her if she had attempted this plan. There was a fairly long answer, but she could not make it out.

A few months after this extraordinary experience Miss R. again felt some presence near her as before, but it seemed to her as though this time it was an influence placid and contented, not dreary and perplexed as on the first occasion. Soon the voice was audible again and announced that she, Frances, had been trying to talk to Essie, but could not get her to hear. The speaker still seemed puzzled, and said she could not make out how it was that she had died and yet was still in the world. Miss R. tried to ask a few questions, but the effort she made in trying to hear the answers seemed to make the presence fade away. She gathered, however, that the unseen visitant was cheerful, and was very interested in some boy called Ian, whom she said she was helping.

The above account was written down at the date of the occurrence by the sister of the dead lady, and the very simplicity of the narrative constitutes a guarantee of authenticity.

A peculiarly eerie story is one which, although I did not hear it first-hand, is given on such reliable authority that I venture to quote it. It was told by a friend of Major (then Captain) Wintour, who married my cousin, Cicely Stanhope, and was written down thus at the date of the occurrence.

" Having had a day's shooting at home, I was going to stay with my friend Marsh at Gaynes Park. During a drive of some fourteen miles, I crossed a bridge, and saw a man leaning over the parapet looking down into the stream. He had a bag by his side, and I offered him a lift if he was going my way.

" Without a word he mounted the cart, but never spoke. I made two efforts subsequently to draw him into conversation, but he seemed hopelessly taciturn, so I desisted, and drove on steadily for a considerable distance, when, reaching a village, I pulled up at the inn. There were people in front of the inn, the windows showed lights within, and the ostler at once came to my horse's head. The stranger thereupon got down, and went straight into the public-house without one word of thanks.

" I said to the ostler: ' Who is that man who has just got

down?' He said: 'I never saw any man.' I said, somewhat impatiently: 'I mean the man I drove up with.' He looked at me in considerable surprise: 'But,' he remonstrated, 'you came up alone, sir!'

"I felt very uncomfortable, and, seeing the landlord, spoke to him about it, repeating my statement that the man who had driven with me had just entered the house. At his request I described the stranger very precisely, at which he looked very serious, and finally said: 'Come in here, sir, and follow me!' I went upstairs with him, and there on a bed lay the man I had given the lift to—*dead.* An inquest had just been held upon his body. He had been found drowned in the stream close to where I saw him."

To turn again from the gruesome to the picturesque, the following story of a vision or apparition is given to me by Miss Hilda Haking, and I will relate it as nearly as possible in her own words. The house to which she refers is now let to strangers, so although its true name is known to me, I do not mention this lest the present owners might prefer that it should remain anonymous.

"On the borders of the Yorkshire moors, and not far from that part of them called the 'Brontë country,' still reminiscent of the sisters who lived out most of their tragic lives there, is a fine old Elizabethan mansion, which we will call the Manor House. As one approaches the quaint ivy-covered lodge which guards the entrance to the long avenue of ancient trees, the bustle and stir of modern life are left behind, and the atmosphere of the past envelops one.

"For as long as I can remember, visits to that old house formed pleasant episodes in my life—from the days of my grandfather, when I was a very small person and the joys of garden and orchard absorbed my attention, to a later date when the house had passed into the possession of our aunts, two old ladies who used to emerge gently from the shadows of the oak-panelled hall to greet us, themselves like an essential part of its remote, old-world atmosphere.

"Shortly before the Great War I was staying at the Manor House, and one lovely summer's day I had been a tour of inspection through the hot-houses, when, wandering back to the house, I came upon one of my aunts inside the entrance hall. Knowing her love of everything connected with the garden, I paused to expatiate upon all the lovely things I had been seeing. It was early in the afternoon, and as I stood talking to her a long shaft of sunlight was piercing the armorial bearings in a window high up in the wall, opposite to the old panelled Gallery. It fell between me and the spot where she stood, and in that shaft of light suddenly I became aware of the appearance of a little elderly man wearing the dress of a bygone century. I saw him with curious distinctness. He was clad faultlessly in Elizabethan garments; and what immediately struck me was that he was not wearing the brilliant colours which one

usually associates with that period, but was apparently in mourning. Yet even so it was impressed upon me that it was not deep mourning, but more the clothes which a man of position not closely related to the deceased might don out of complimentary respect. Every detail of his costume was clear to me—the black velvet hat, the black trunk-hose slashed with silver, a very handsome silver-and-black waistcoat, and his wide, black silver-buckled shoes.

"Surprised as I was, I did not mention this incident to my aunt, as she was wont to dismiss with annoyance anything which did not come under her individual experience; but, by and by, when I found myself alone with my other aunt, I described minutely the vision, or mental picture, which had come to me so strangely.

"'It is most odd,' she exclaimed, 'that you have seen this figure either in reality or in your mind's-eye, for in the time of Queen Elizabeth the owner of this house was a man who must have answered to the exact description of the figure you saw. He was a great man in these parts, though the only relic of him now is the initial G. which is carved upon the stone in the courtyard, worn down with age, from which riders used to mount their horses. This man had no direct heir, and the distant cousins whom he knew would inherit the place at his death disliked him cordially, for although they were poor, he did nothing for them during his lifetime. So when he died and they reigned here in his stead, they put on no black for him; and the legend is that he occasionally haunts the place dressed in the suitable and handsome mourning which he considers his successors ought to have worn for him!'

"Now why after my many visits to the Manor House there should have come to me that day, abruptly and without rhyme or reason, a vision of this man, I cannot pretend to say. I can swear that no hint of his story had ever reached my ears; he was not even an ancestor of my own in whom I should be likely to take an interest; and by what trick of sunlight or photography his image was produced upon my brain during one out of my innumerable sojourns in that house, it is impossible to explain. All I know is that when the last and elder of the two old ladies withdrew even more quietly than was her wont from the family circle, as we sought for mourning amid the gay London shops we determined that the little old man of centuries ago should not be the only one to show a right and fitting respect for the memory of a sometime owner of the old Manor House."

Another picturesque incident occurred to a friend of mine. He was walking round St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, one afternoon, and sat down to rest in the dim peace of the ancient church. He was, so he informed me, thinking solely of material matters, of some business he had been transacting, when, looking up, he became aware

of a very distinct apparition in the pulpit in front of him. A man in the black gown of Geneva, evidently a divine of the Reformation period, stood there, preaching most earnestly to an invisible congregation. Not a sound was to be heard; but the man, who was of venerable appearance, appeared to be exhorting an unseen audience with the greatest fervour, gesticulating vehemently, bending first to the right, then to the left, over the pulpit, thumping the cushion in front of him, and all the while his lips were moving as though speech were pouring eloquently from him.

My friend sat in amazement staring at the apparition, which was clearly visible only a few feet away from him; then he looked round at the other people who were wandering about the church, but evidently they saw nothing unusual; some of them even came near the pulpit and looked up at a Jacobean monument adjacent, yet obviously to them the pulpit was vacant. Meanwhile for over a quarter of an hour my friend sat there watching the phantom preacher, who thus, without any plausible reason, seemed to have been conjured up out of a long-dead past. Then, gradually, the vision became less distinct, by and by the wall beyond was visible through it, and slowly it faded away into nothingness.

But if a vision appearing amid suitably picturesque surroundings, makes a readier appeal to the imagination, and for this reason is easier of comprehension, more actually curious is one without any plausible *raison d'être*, and which occurs amid modern, incongruous conditions.

Miss Williamson, whose sister, Lady McClelland, corroborates all essential details, was born in Chili, and a couple of years ago she was staying in a private hotel in Lancaster Gate, the number of which is known to me, but which for obvious reasons I withhold. In order to re-create the atmosphere in which the incident took place, it is only necessary to picture a typical hotel drawing-room, with its complete absence of anything conducive to flights of imagination—pictureless walls covered with white-watered paper, and a flaring gas chandelier which lit up the remotest corners of a somewhat bare apartment, effectually precluding all sense of mystery or romance.

The hour was 9.30 p.m., and Miss Williamson, seated upon a sofa, was conversing with two other ladies. Nothing, she assures me, had been discussed which could possibly have inclined the thoughts of the trio to anything supernatural; the conversation for the most part had consisted of platitudes, the outcome of boredom, for bedtime was approaching, and all were feeling sleepy. Suddenly, in the brightly lighted room, Miss Williamson saw standing in the doorway a most lovely girl, who was looking in her direction with a charming smile. The stranger was wearing a very pretty black dress with flowing, graceful draperies, and her hair was bound with a bright

fillet; but what was arresting was her extraordinary beauty and grace—she was "a joy to look at."

Miss Williamson was gazing at the new-comer wondering if the girl was a fresh arrival in the hotel or merely a visitor to someone staying there, when suddenly, with a shock, she discovered that she could *see through* the form of the beautiful stranger. Beyond the smiling, charming figure, the furniture of the room was dimly visible. Horrified at the discovery that she was suffering from what she at once concluded was an hallucination, Miss Williamson could not speak, but almost simultaneously the lady by her side exclaimed, "Do you see *that*?" and pointed in amazement at the apparition, while the third lady likewise exclaimed that she also saw it. And as all three watched, the phantom girl moved slowly away from the doorway, and, still smiling at them, glided leisurely across the room, passing through the chairs and tables *en route*, till, on the further side of the room, she disappeared into the wall!

A more exquisite vision, amid more prosaic surroundings, Miss Williamson said she could not have imagined. But even granting that the vision was subjective, why any one of those who saw it should have visualized it individually, still more why all three should have done so simultaneously, remains unaccountable.

Another attractive story was told to me by the late Sir William Richmond, who said that the facts, besides being well known to his family, had been taken down by him direct from his grandmother's account given to him verbatim a year before her death.

"My mother," she related, "died when we lived in the City. My father immediately left the house and took another in Chelsea at the back of which was a large and neglected garden. Pleased at the liberty we thus gained, we City children delighted in that garden for games and pastimes, and we had with us in our romps a Newfoundland dog of a breed which had just been imported.

"One day we were engaged in playing 'catch who catch can.' There were four of us—my eldest brother, I, and two others. My eldest brother, running first, came to some worn stone steps amidst the bushes which descended apparently into a kind of hole. I followed. Suddenly we stopped short. There at the bottom of the steps stood our mother, dressed in a blue silk gown with white spots. Saying nothing, but standing there in the attitude of warning my brother back, her appearance struck terror into us, and we retreated immediately.

"Upon our returning to the house, we at once related the fact that we had seen our mother in the garden. Our father grew very angry, and sent us supperless to bed for what he considered was obviously a monstrous lie.

"A few days afterwards the Newfoundland dog was missing

search was made for him in the garden, and by and by it was found that he must have made his way down these same steps where we had intended to go, he must have trodden upon some rotten planks which were at the bottom, and so fallen into a deep well which was concealed there, and been drowned."

"Upon the whole," added Sir William, "this is the best attested story of a visitor from the other world, besides being one of the most beautiful, I have ever heard. So many, indeed most, ghost stories are silly, irrelevant and quite unconvincing, but this one tells of the mother's spirit still watching over her children's safety, and there is no doubt that, whatever interpretation may be put upon the incident, the apparition did actually save the lives of my grandmother and her brothers."

Visions which are apparently induced by some form of mental telepathy are more comprehensible; though more rare and of greater interest are those which apparently indicate telepathy between a human being and an animal. Many will recall the strange instance attested by Sir Rider Haggard of the sympathy between himself and his dying dog. In a dream it seemed to him that his personality had been merged into that of the animal, so that he not only felt the acute distress from which the dog must have suffered, but, during his sleep, attempted to bark for assistance. He subsequently wrote a very interesting account of the experience to the Press. But another case of apparent telepathy between a human being and an animal which I have heard since seems to me almost more remarkable.

As with a previous story, the lady to whom it occurred does not wish her name mentioned; but I have her written statement respecting the occurrence, and I can guarantee the authenticity of the account, which I give nearly in her own words. Her sister, to whom she refers, is a well-known landowner in Norfolk, and most of the people concerned in the story are still alive.

"My sister in Norfolk had a dog named Bounce. It was a stray and a mongrel to whom she gave a home out of charity, a very ugly, common-looking dog. I felt sorry for the beast, because it was unprepossessing, and while I stayed with her I used to pet it, and the dog in return showed great affection for me.

"Some time later I was staying in Aberdeen, when about five in the morning of August 25, 1908, I was awakened by a loud barking in my bedroom. I sat up in bed, and, to my surprise, I saw Bounce. I put out my hand and felt him. He had his collar on, and he was warm and solid to the touch. In utter astonishment I exclaimed, 'Bounce—what brings you here?' and a human voice replied: '*I was shot yesterday—I have come to say good-bye!*' Then the dog was gone. How he came, how he went, whence came the voice, I could not say; I was left in a state of complete bewilderment, and

on going down to breakfast I at once told my experience and asked if Bounce could be in the house.

"My story was greeted with undisguised merriment. The evening before we had had a dish for dinner of which I was particularly fond—crab-pie—and my experience was at once assigned to this cause. I had to endure considerable chaff on the subject throughout the rest of my visit, and two friends are still living who can testify to this and to the fashion in which they teased me respecting my apparently foolish hallucination.

"About six weeks afterwards I received a letter from my sister's governess (who can corroborate my statement) in which she mentioned as an afterthought: 'I have always forgotten to tell you that as we were going away and it was impossible to get a home for a mongrel like Bounce, we had him shot.' I at once wrote back and asked on what day and at what hour Bounce had been killed. *The answer returned was that he was shot on August 24 about noon. He appeared in my room at five o'clock on the morning of the following day!* I can only add that at the time when I saw the dog, it did not occur to me even remotely that he could be dead. There was nothing unusual in his appearance. His bark was loud enough to rouse me from a heavy sleep; he did not look distressed, merely excited as a dog might be at the sight of an old friend, and I can only repeat that when I patted him he was apparently alive and tangible beneath my hand!"

An instance of apparent telepathy happened to, and was written down circumstantially by, one of the Fathers at the Brompton Oratory on March 16, 1919, as follows:

"One afternoon a short time ago I was asked to visit a lady, Mrs. Ponsonby, who was ill. When I arrived at her house, in Montpelier Square, S.W., I was met by the doctor, who begged me not to administer the last rites at that particular moment, but to be satisfied with giving the patient a few cheering words and urging her to make an effort to recover—in fact, not to give herself up. I consented, but when I saw the lady I greatly regretted my promise and the fact that the doctor should have made such a request, as I feared the patient was much worse than I had been given to understand. However, the promise had been given, so I arranged that I would come back in the morning and administer the last sacrament. Before I left the house, I gave the nurse our telephone number and asked her to telephone to me if her patient should become suddenly worse.

"As usual, that night the telephone was switched on to one of the Fathers' rooms, with a view to any possible sick call. I went to bed at my usual time, and in the early morning was awakened out of a deep sleep by my bedroom door opening, and saw by the light of the moon through the uncovered window a figure standing by the

door. I understood the person to say something about a sick call. I sat up in bed and said, ' Speak more clearly, I don't hear,' and I saw, as I thought, by the light of the moon, the white collar of the Father in charge. The reply came more clearly : ' *There is no time to lose, there is a telephone message.*' The word ' telephone ' brought back in a moment my visit of the previous afternoon. I did not, therefore, ask for the address, but sprang out of bed, the door closing as I did so.

" Turning on the light, I observed that it was just about a quarter to four. I quickly dressed and went to the chapel, remarking by the way on the forgetfulness of my caller also to turn on the light. As fast as I could I crossed the space between the house and the gates that shut it off from the main road, when I found, to my surprise, the gates locked, and had to knock up the lodge porter to let me out, but within a minute or two I had reached the house I had visited in the afternoon.

" There were lights in the windows, and after my first ring I looked at my watch and saw that it still wanted five minutes to four. I rang again and again. A clock in the neighbourhood struck the hour. I again rang, thinking it strange there was no one to answer the door, after telephoning. Still there was no answer, and my regret of the previous day came upon me with redoubled force. I again banged at the door, making enough noise, as it seemed to me, to waken the whole household. The electric light was on in the hall and on the staircase, as I could see. I remembered there were only six people in the house—the sick lady in one room ; her husband, who was also seriously ill, in another ; and the nurses. Evidently, I thought, the two day-nurses must be asleep and the two night-nurses in attendance on the patients. A cat on the other side of the road at frequent intervals made a horrid noise. I waited. It was impossible to go back after the telephone call, but it seemed more and more strange that I should be kept waiting as I was. I again rang furiously. The peal seemed to reverberate through the whole house. I looked at my watch, it was twelve minutes past four. And still I waited with increasing anxiety. At last I thought I will get a stone and throw it at one of the lighted windows. Just as I was about to do this the cat again made its horrid noise and I threw the stone with all my might in the direction of the cat. The clock chimed a quarter past four, and then, to my great relief, the door opened.

" I did not wait to ask any questions, but went straight up to Mrs. Ponsonby's room, where, as I went in, I saw the nurse kneeling by the bedside, saying some prayers. I noticed that she was startled as I entered, and I also heard Mrs. Ponsonby saying : ' I do wish Father C. would come.' Afterwards I was told that for the space of about half an hour before my arrival she had been expressing a wish to see me, and that, in consequence, the nurse had asked if she should read some prayers. I begged the nurse to leave the

room for a few minutes, heard Mrs. Ponsonby's confession, and administered the last sacrament. Within an hour or two she became unconscious, and after reciting the prayers for the dying, I was preparing to leave the house when the nurse began to thank me for coming. 'You know you quite startled me,' she said. I replied: 'On the contrary, my thanks are due to you for telephoning.' 'But I did not telephone,' she answered. 'Well,' I said, 'somebody did, perhaps it was Mrs. Ponsonby's sister.'

"The next morning, on going to speak to the Father whose duty it had been to answer the telephone, wishing to congratulate him on the day which happened to be his Festa, I said: 'I am sorry I spoke to you so sharply last night.' 'What do you mean?' he said. 'Why,' I replied, 'when you came to call me.' 'But I never did call you last night,' he answered. 'Oh,' I said, 'you came to my room at a quarter to four this morning and told me there was a telephone sick call.' He answered: 'I never left my room last night. I had a sleepless night, and happen to know that I was awake at that very time you mention, as I had my light on; and what is more,' he added, '*there was no telephone call last night.*'

"On inquiry at the telephone exchange it was stated that there was no record of any call for the Oratory on the night in question."

Stories of monks who haunt the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage are plentiful, and I heard, first-hand, the tale, told by the late Dr. Jessop with an imagination rich and rare, of how late at night he watched the silent figure of a Dominican gliding amongst the treasures of a library. Sir Henry Jerningham likewise told me the following stories connected with the fine old house of Costessy, in Norfolk, since, alas! pulled down.

Sir Henry lived there for twenty-five years with his cousin, Lord Stafford, and during that time the spectre of a monk used constantly to be seen in the library as though searching for something amongst the books. One day when Lord Stafford saw it, he left the room, and encountering his chaplain in the hall, he said: "You will find the ghost in the library; go in and find out what it wants."

The priest obeyed, and afterwards affirmed that, addressing the spectre, he received for answer that between the pages of a certain book in the library was a confession, and that the dead man could not rest till this was destroyed. The priest found the confession as stated, and tore it up unread, after which the spectre ceased to appear.

The whole atmosphere of the ancient house, however, seemed full of the uncanny. Once Lord Stafford told Sir Henry that he had sat alone in the hall in the dusk by the fire, in order to see if anything happened. He saw nothing; but as his hand was hanging over the side of the chair, he suddenly felt it clasped and held by another, but invisible, hand!

Costessy was one of the many houses in England where a phantom

coach is said to drive up to the door before a death. One day Sir Henry distinctly heard a vehicle arrive and the door-bell ring. The footman passed through the hall, and he said: "William, there is someone at the door." "Yes, sir," was the reply, "I heard the bell ring, and am just going to answer it." But when the man opened the door there was nothing there. Shortly afterwards, Lord Stafford died, and the doom of the ancient house was sealed. It was subsequently pulled down, and all its associations—ghostly and historical—for ever dissipated.

At another house where a coach was usually heard rumbling up to the door on a particular day in the year, the inmates lived in a state of tension as the date approached. A friend who was staying there left on the actual anniversary when this ghostly event was anticipated, having heard much discussion before his departure respecting the dreaded visit. Afterwards meeting his host in London, he inquired if it had really taken place as expected. "Oh, indeed it did!" responded his host, awe-stricken. "The coach came, several of us heard it drive up distinctly, and the door-bell pealed loudly many times. But I gave strict orders that the servants were not to answer the bell; and after a time the sound ceased." "Oh," said his friend, "that accounts for my experience! I missed my train, and came back to ask if you would extend your hospitality to me for another night, but although I rang and rang, I could not get the door opened, and at last I had to return to the station and wait for a late train back to town!"

Haverholme Priory, near Sleaford, the property of Lord Winchelsea, is a house which has many interesting associations. It was built on the site of a Gilbertine priory, where St. Thomas hid himself for a couple of days after the Council of Northampton; while in recent times it is said to have figured as the "Chesney Wold" of *Bleak House*. Along one side of the building runs a gravelled path known as the Ghost's Walk, and a friend of mine, when staying there, who did not know the tradition connected with this, was much puzzled by hearing mysterious footsteps pacing to and fro under his window long after midnight.

One Sunday morning, a beautiful day in early September, he walked to church through the inner grounds, and crossing the bridge over the river Sher, which runs through the park, he proceeded down the Long Avenue with fine elms on either side. He relates: "On approaching the bridge which runs over Ruskington Beck, I heard a great whizzing noise behind me, loud and fierce. I thought it was another guest who had said he intended to ride to church on his motor bicycle; and without turning round, I called out to him and asked him why he had started so early, and why in such a fluster! No answer came, and simultaneously the whizzing passed by me, and went on in front of me, while nothing was to be seen! I thought it most odd and was puzzled how to account for it.

" In the evening I went with my host to a church on the Haverholme property, and after the service I talked to the Rector, who had been tutor to the late Lord Winchelsea and his brothers, and who therefore, I felt, probably knew more about the place than anyone else. On my questioning him about the house, not knowing of my experience, he volunteered the information that the Long Avenue bore a bad reputation, so much so that when he had occasion to visit the Priory at night, he neither went nor returned that way. The tradition, he said, pointed to its being haunted by a Gilbertine canoness, and that the notorious point *was a particular tree near the bridge over Ruskington Beck !* "

But curious as are many of the yarns one hears in England, it is when one steps over the border that the picturesque and the incredible go hand in hand. No true Scot ever troubles where reality begins and myth and legend end. Amazing tales of the great houses of Scotland are part of the history of the land. The Curse of Fyvie and the Weeping Stones, the Green Lady who makes the room which she visits iridescent, have been historical for generations. Romantic stories connected with Inverary are equally well known. When a chief passes the ravens flock from the glens and hover over the ancient castle, and the famous galley appears on Loch Fyne. The latter is a ship like the one in the Arms of the Argylls, and it is seen with three people on board, of whom one is supposed to be connected with Saint Columba. When Lord Archibald Campbell died in 1913, a Scotsman assured me that the galley passed silently up the loch. At a particular point it drifts off the water, and passing inland disappears at the site of a holy place associated with Saint Columba and given by the forbears of the Campbells to the church. On this last occasion it was said to have been seen by a number of people, including one " foreigner," that is one who was not a Campbell or even a Highlander, but a Saxon, and who exclaimed when it was passing over the land : " Look at that funny airship ! "

A few years ago a small party was staying at Inverary, the guests of the present Duke of Argyll. In the afternoon, tea was served in the library, where the Duke, his sister, Lady Elspeth, and the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, together with several visitors, were seated round a big table. Presently one of the guests heard a loud noise like that of banging books close at hand—it was as though a whole shelf-full of volumes had been taken out and dashed to the floor of the open gallery running round the library. He afterwards related : " I just looked up but did not speak ; no one said anything ; but I noticed the Duke and his sister exchange glances and then look at me. It struck me no one else had heard anything.

" After tea the Duke spoke to his sister, and then he took me into his private room and said to me : ' You heard a noise when we

were at tea. My sister and I *saw* that you heard it, but no one else did.' He then told me that that side of the castle was haunted, and that the noise has been occurring for years. It had gone on for an hour in that room on the previous Sunday evening when he was sitting there. 'My sister," he added, 'will tell you all about it.'

"On the following day, when Lady Elspeth was walking with me, she told me the story. They regarded me, she remarked, as quite one of the 'elect,' as I was the only person who had heard the noise besides her brother and herself. She told me that she had been expecting to hear it, for when she went into the library before tea she 'saw the old man.' This was the ghost of a Harper who was hanged at Inverary by Montrose's men when they came up the glen after the great Marquis of Argyll. He appears in the Campbell tartan, and is a harmless, pathetic old creature; but the curious noise which I heard seems co-related to his appearance." Some members of the family only hear the noise, some see the Harper, but the story is all the more unaccountable because the present castle is a comparatively new place, built in 1750, and not on the same site as the former one; the impression, however, is that the old man appears where the tree grew on which he was hanged.

Of a different type was the tale which the late Lord Dupplin used to tell. At Dupplin Castle there was a legend that in a former generation one of the maids, made love to by a son of the house, fled in terror and flung herself from a high window in a tower. It was said that at the hour of midnight this tragedy was re-enacted. A ghostly form might be seen flitting through the gloom, a ghostly scream was sometimes heard, and the window burst open. Certain it was that on many occasions the window, which had been securely fastened and barred, was mysteriously found wide open, and the household shunned the ill-omened spot after dark.

Lord Dupplin was once regaling some guests with this tale at dinner, when several young officers present suggested that they should go at midnight and watch for the reputed ghost. Wagers were taken, and, somewhat to the annoyance of Lord Kinnoull, at the time appointed a merry party repaired to the haunted tower. No lights were allowed, so they sat smoking in the dark, but as time passed and no apparition appeared, they got extremely bored, and Lord Dupplin had to endure considerable chaff on the non-success of his entertainment. At length one of the men exclaimed: "Well, it's past midnight now, and your ghost hasn't come; I am off to bed!"

Scarcely had he spoken than the great window in front of them, shuttered and barred, was burst open as though by a violent storm of wind, and a silence fell on the petrified watchers. Nothing else was seen or heard; but when they advanced to the window and looked out, the night was calm and beautiful, not the faintest breeze was stirring, and any trick having been played upon the watchers

from outside the castle was obviously impossible, owing to the height of the tower in which they had waited.

"I cannot account for what happened, but I saw it with my own eyes," Lord Dupplin said when relating the story. The window was subsequently bricked up, and the ghostly suicide is no longer enacted.

I have had occasion to refer previously to the Mystery of Glamis, a secret which has fascinated the imagination of several generations. As a child I heard that Lord Glamis had told my eldest brother, at Oxford, that the story of a monster which was housed upon the premises, and which is since deceased, was a fact, and had given rise to the many tales which one can only regret should be exploded, so thoroughly do they harmonize with the romantic, mediæval atmosphere of the place. There are, however, enough historical spooks left in the ancient castle, including the famous Earl Beardie, to satisfy the most inveterate ghost-hunter; and an account of certain occurrences there, written many years ago, is not without interest. For the rest—

> I cannot tell how true it be.
> I tell the tale as 'twas told to me.

My aunt, Mrs. Henry Pickering, had a brother, Mr. George March, who was in the Foreign Office. As the result of a romantic rescue when one of her carriage-horses ran away, he married the fascinating Miss Virginia Gabriel, a lady formerly famous for her wit, her charm, and, above all, her musical genius; indeed, she was the centre of a brilliant coterie which resembled a salon. In 1870 she paid a long visit to Glamis, five years after the death of the 12th Lord Strathmore, and returned full of the mysteries, which she said had greatly increased since the decease of the previous owner in 1865. I give her account verbatim, while disclaiming personal responsibility.

"Unquestionably there is something strange about the house. The chaplain told me he felt it more the longer he lived there; the factor, Mr. Ralston, a dry, shrewd, hard-headed Scotchman, never could be induced to sleep in the castle after he had been initiated into the secret. One winter evening he had come to some theatricals in the house, when a sudden snow-storm came on, and the road appeared impassable, but he would not even spend the night on a sofa, and insisted on routing out gardeners and stablemen to dig out a path to his house, nearly a mile off, outside the park. Lady Strathmore (the wife of the 13th Lord Strathmore) once confessed to Mr. Ralston her great anxiety to unravel the mystery. He looked earnestly at her and said very gravely: 'Lady Strathmore, it is fortunate that you do not know it, and can never know it, for if you did, you would not be a happy woman.' Such a speech from such a man is certainly uncanny.

" The present gossip is that the ghosts are endeavouring to terrify the new possessor and his family from making their home at the castle. After the death of the 12th Earl, the lawyer and agent initiated the heir into the family secret. He went from them to his wife (*née* Miss Oswald-Smith) and said: ' My dearest, you know how often we have joked over the secret room and the family mystery. I have been into the room; I have heard the secret; and if you wish to please me, you will never mention the subject to me again! ' Although naturally filled with curiosity, Lady Strathmore obeyed. But not long afterwards a curious incident occurred.

" Her husband made a good many alterations and improvements, and one day, when the family were in town, a workman came upon a door opening into a long passage. He went down this some way, then became alarmed, and, turning back, went to tell the clerk of the works. Immediately all the work was stopped, and the head man telegraphed to Lord Strathmore in London and to Mr. Dundas, the lawyer, in Edinburgh. Both arrived by the earliest train, and the workman was subjected to a severe examination respecting what he had, or had not, seen; the end of it being that he and his family were subsidized and induced to emigrate! It is unquestionable that for many years after the revelation of the secret, Lord Strathmore was quite a changed man, silent and moody, with an anxious, scared look upon his face.

" In November, 1869, a dance was given in the new dining-room. All the party had been very merry and danced till the small hours of the morning. The three sets of rooms on the Clock landing were respectively occupied by the Streatfields (Lady Strathmore's sister and her husband); Mr. and Lady Frances Trevanion (Lord Strathmore's sister and her husband); and Mr. and Mrs. Munro from Lindertis. The latter were in the Red Room, and their little boy in the dressing-room, the outer door of which was rather stiff and difficult to open.

" In the middle of the night Mrs. Munro awoke with a sensation as if someone was bending over her, and she fancied she felt a beard brush her face. The night-light had gone out, and she called her husband to get up and find the matches. Then in the pale glimmer of the winter morning she saw a figure pass into the dressing-room. Thinking it was her husband moving about, she groped for the match-box and struck a light, calling out: ' Cam! Cam! I have found the matches! ' To her surprise, however, on looking round, she saw that her husband had not moved from her side, and he grumbled sleepily: ' What *are* you bothering about! '

" At that moment they both heard a shriek of terror from the child in the dressing-room, and, rushing in, found him in great alarm, declaring he had seen a giant! They took him into their own room, and while they were quieting him off to sleep, they heard a fearful

crash, like a heavy piece of furniture falling. Just then the big clock struck four.

"Nothing more happened, and the next morning Mr. Munro extracted a reluctant promise from his wife to say nothing about her fright, as the subject was known to be distasteful to their host. However, when breakfast was half over, Lady Fanny Trevanion, came down yawning and rubbing her eyes, complaining of her disturbed night. She always slept with a night-light and a little dog in her room, and she said the dog had awakened her by howling; the night-light had gone out, and while she was hunting for matches, she and her husband heard a tremendous crashing noise, followed by the clock striking four, and they were both so frightened that they could not sleep again.

"On this provocation Mrs. Munro could not resist relating her own experience. No explanation was offered, and the following night the three couples agreed to watch in their respective rooms. Nothing was *seen*; but the same loud crashing noise was heard, and they all rushed to the landing; as they stood there with scared faces, the clock struck four. But nothing happened, and the noise was not heard again.

"Dr. Nicholson, Dean of Brechin, said, when staying at Glamis, that he had gone to bed in a room half-way up a winding staircase, with the door locked, when he saw a tall figure enter draped in a long dark cloak, fastened at the neck with a clasp. He did not attempt to address the phantom, which disappeared in the wall. Dr. Forbes, the Bishop of Brechin, who was then also staying in the castle, was very incredulous about this apparition, and teased his friend by saying: 'Now, Mr. Dean, we all know you are the most persevering beggar in Scotland. I am sure you brought out your collecting-book and laid the ghost by asking him for a subscription!'

"Next night, the Provost of Perth joined the party, and, to the delight of Dr. Nicholson, said that he had had a similar mysterious visitor the last time he had slept in that room. The Dean at once triumphantly hurried him up to the Bishop's room and made him repeat his version of the tale to the sceptical prelate!"

The late Archbishop of York once told a curious dream which occurred to his wife, Mrs. Maclagan, *née* the Hon. Augusta Barrington. When staying at Tullyallan Castle, a comfortable modern house, with nothing to turn her thoughts in the direction of Glamis, she dreamed, with a great amount of detail, that she was in the Blue Room at Glamis and encountered the ghostly presence of an old man with a very long beard. At the same date, a lady who was staying at Glamis for the first time and occupying the Blue Room fancied she saw the very figure which Mrs. Maclagan saw in her dream at Tullyallan! One point is extremely interesting in this story. In Mrs. Maclagan's dream she fancied that the room, which in all other respects she remembered so well, had the fireplace in a different

corner to where she had actually seen it. "So persuaded was I of this," she subsequently related, "that when I saw the room the following year and found that my *dream* memory was right and my *waking* memory wrong, I could scarcely believe my eyes, and brought upon myself some ridicule by asking if the fireplace had been changed—not a likely thing in a house of that age and walls of that thickness! This part of my dream subsequently excited great interest in the minds of Dr. Acland and other Oxford Dons, as a striking confirmation of the theory that memory impressions are always accurate when undisturbed by outside influences. I wrote my dream down, but told it to very few people."

This last story has another element of interest in that the figure of the old man with the long beard seen by Mrs. Maclagan apparently coincides with the figure which was developed in the photograph of the Chapel taken by Miss Cavendish Bentinck. None the less, although it is said that the camera cannot lie, no statement is more fallacious. Not only is it extremely easy to fake an appearance on a plate, but any faulty adjustment, any imperfection of construction in the camera, may produce results which, to the uninitiated, seem conclusive evidence of the supernatural. One of the most picturesque stories in this connection, however, occurred to a professional photographer who was photographing an ancient Italian bureau for a dealer. On developing the photograph, there came a distinct impression of a beautiful, cruel-looking hand with long tapering fingers—it might have been the hand of a Borgia—fumbling for the lock! Again and again, the photographer said, he photographed the same piece of furniture, but never again could he get a similar result.

An interesting story in this connection for which it is difficult to account was told to me by Lady Inglefield, wife of Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Inglefield.

One day her brother brought her a photograph and asked her if she recognized it. The sight of it was a great shock to her, as she at once saw that it was the photograph of another brother of hers who had died nineteen years before, after a painful illness. Not only was the likeness very apparent, but it bore evident tokens of great suffering, and was obviously a photograph of him shortly before his death, as he had then grown a beard, which he never had formerly. On her asking her brother how he could possibly have obtained the photograph, he told her the following remarkable story.

It appears that he had heard of a man who was a clever psychometrist, and sent to the latter a letter which had been written by his mother in order to see if the man could tell anything correctly about the personality of the writer. Now the letter in question had been penned at a time when the writer's thoughts were full of her dying son. The psychometrist photographed it; and there

came out only a very small photograph of the letter in a corner, and in the centre of the plate there developed a large and clear photograph of the man who had been in the writer's thoughts!

Lady Inglefield brought me the photograph to see, and I examined it most carefully, comparing it with a photograph of the living man which had been taken before his illness. The likeness was most striking and it was impossible to doubt that the two photographs represented the same person, under different conditions and in a different attitude, i.e., one was emphatically not a copy of the other.

"But," I naturally asked, "was it not possible for the psychometrist to have procured a photograph of your brother! If the letter contained references to him it might be a comparatively simple matter to trace some old photograph and reproduce it in this fashion."

"There was no possibility of this," Lady Inglefield replied. "No photograph of Chris ever existed taken during his last illness. And in this particular photograph he is represented with a beard which he only grew during the last days of his life, and which scarcely anyone besides myself and my mother ever saw."

This story appears incredible; yet in Flammarion's recent work *At the Moment of Death*, page 84, he discusses another aspect of this very question. He remarks: "Our thoughts act materially and carry with them a kind of effluvium. They may stamp themselves upon an object, upon a sheet of paper," and he relates an experiment at the Salpetrière Hospital in 1889 when he was asked to imagine his portrait upon a card specially selected and secretly marked out of a pack, and to hand the pack, well shuffled, to a certain nervous patient. The woman at once picked this card out of the entire pack, and so distinctly saw upon it the imaginary portrait that she requested permission to keep it as a souvenir! In the case related by Lady Inglefield one has to believe that the writer of a letter, under stress of strong emotion, impressed an image so clearly upon the paper then in contact with her hands that, years after, a photographic camera could reproduce from it an impression of the person who had been prominently in her thoughts at the time of writing.

Admittedly this opens out a field of speculation at which common sense mocks while imagination is stirred. Can an inanimate object, if kept from contact with other objects, retain the impress of apparently ephemeral thoughts and emotions of which it has received the record, and this so strongly that long years afterwards it can reproduce a visible representation of them on a receptive brain or a sensitized plate? In the world of Matter nothing is ever lost, Matter is transformed but never extinguished—can the same be said of the apparently transient human sensations of fear

or grief? Do they start vibrations and create records which are more permanent than we are aware?

If so, what impressions might not the inanimate objects around us retain and transmit, given a subject suitably receptive?—the furniture of a room, the walls of a house might, under these conditions, become vehicles for conveying sensations or engendering visions for which the recipient cannot account. Once concede that this comes within the range of possibility and the superstition that certain objects are lucky or unlucky may have a basis in fact; still more, the belief in haunted houses is intelligible. Fantastic as is the speculation, we are confronted by the recognition that only a few years ago it would have been thought an incredible fairy-tale that a record in a gramophone could retain and reproduce the voice of one long since dead, or that the vibrations from the voice of a singer could materialize into a beautiful picture which can be made permanent in stained glass.

So we sit upon the fence and look around at this incredible world of ours with ever-increasing amazement; while one thing only remains clear—there is no enigma about which, save through ignorance, we ever say *I know.*

Throughout the æons, human opinions and human beliefs progress and retrogress like the waves of the ocean—unstable as the shifting tides. The tortured Martyr of one generation is the worshipped Saint of the next; the Scientific Fact of one Age is the exploded myth of the following; The Creed of to-day, for which a man would die, is the Superstition of to-morrow. And still we question what is subjective and what is objective amid a medley of mysteries. . . .

One man sees visions and dreams dreams; to his fellow he is a weak-brained fool. The "clairaudience," the clairvoyance of the psychic is, to the medical faculty, auditory hallucination or hysteria—the first promptings of mental aberration. We know that the presence of fever, the injection of morphia can people a room with an illusory crowd—jostling, talking, terribly real to the sufferer who implores solitude; that opium can bring heaven and hell within the cognizance of every mortal. We know that the borderline between sanity and insanity remains so fine that who shall say with rigid accuracy where the one begins and the other ends—while the sane are often freakishly eccentric and the insane abnormally shrewd with faculties akin to genius? So, too, Man's vaunted Freewill is bound by limitations so subtle, so erratic, that it is impossible to define where responsibility rules or where he is the puppet of Circumstance; his prized individuality itself is but a sequence of Chance. In brief, Man's entire outlook upon Life, his actions, his faiths, his aspirations, his moral assets—all the sum total of that elusive essence he terms his *Soul*—can be transformed by a tap on the skull, transposed by a faulty gland, obliter-

ated or ejected from its tenement by a material, microscopic bit of lead! Life remains eternally sublime and ridiculous; while the consummation of all knowledge is the knowledge of our ignorance.

Meantime, in all explorations into the Unknown we are confronted by two considerations. First, the crass credulity exhibited by mankind throughout the ages, the amazing aptitude of every race, in every clime, for reading anthropomorphic interpretations into the intangible. Secondly, the fact that the human brain is an organism so delicate, so easily dislocated, that to toy with its normal functions, to divert it from its legitimate usage, too often entails a serious penalty. In sleep, by a natural process, the mind drifts rudderless over the sea of imagination; but to cultivate that condition—by a very simple system of misusage, to extend it into our waking hours, to relax ever so slightly our grip on the steering apparatus of Reason—can be fraught with consequences disastrous to the experimenter. Such excursions into the abnormal develop any latent tendency to hallucinations.

Sir Neville Jodrell told me that a doctor once related to him the following experience. A busy medical man, every evening he wrote letters in his study till a late hour when the maid arrived with a hand-candle which she put on the table beside him. One evening she came as usual, set down his candle and bade him good night. A few minutes after, he looked up again, and to his surprise saw her once more standing beside the table. She set down the candle as before and left the room. After a few minutes he saw her for the third time in the act of putting down the candle beside him. He stared at her fixedly. The vision was distinct and apparently tangible, yet through it he discovered that he could see the fire in the grate beyond flickering clearly. Convinced that what he beheld was an hallucination engendered by an overworked and tired brain, he took his lancet out of his pocket, and steadily watching the figure before him, he pricked a small vein in his arm. As the blood flowed, relieving the pressure, the vision vanished and did not recur,

In my individual experience I came across the following illustration in point. A young soldier who used often to be my partner at balls, was particularly lively, good-looking and popular; so much so that when his regiment was quartered in Burmah, he acquired the nickname of the Burmese Idol. A few years later I passed a man in the park who looked so ill and emaciated that I remarked to my companion: "That is either the Burmese Idol or his wraith—it is like him, but how terribly altered!" The following night he re-introduced himself to me at a ball, and I found it was indeed my former acquaintance, but sadly changed, wan and pale, with a haunted look in his eyes.

As we were sitting out, some turn in the conversation which

I cannot recall led us to the subject of animal suicide; and my companion announced that he had come across several instances where animals had destroyed themselves under circumstances which indicated premeditation. I replied that I could endorse this, for a parrot belonging to my brother had apparently deliberately killed itself. Evidently unhappy at having been taken from a former owner, the bird had on two occasions been frustrated in an attempt to cut its throat on the door of its cage; but at last one morning it was found dead with its neck cruelly lacerated. It must have persistently moved its head backwards and forwards along the bar in its cage, despite the pain, till it had achieved its purpose.

Suddenly my companion turned to me. "Don't let us talk of suicide!" he said abruptly.

"Well, you started the subject," I protested; "why do you look so scared?"

"Because the after-fate of all who commit suicide is too awful!" he said in horror-stricken accents. "Don't ask me how I know —*but I do know!*"

I changed the conversation promptly; but a fortnight later I was told that the unfortunate man had blown his brains out. In the solitude of his life in a lonely station in Burmah he had gone in for Spiritualism as an amusement till it became an obsession; and at last he used to complain that he was never alone—even when seated in his study in England endeavouring to read he always saw an unwelcome Presence opposite to him from which escape was impossible, till at last, in desperation, he seized upon the only way out.

Now which was cause and which was effect in this case I am not prepared to suggest,—whether his mind first becoming unhinged engendered these visions, or whether the initial misuse of his mentality undermined it and produced permanently an abnormal condition—who shall say? I only know that his was not an isolated case, and that I have encountered many other instances in which toying with unknown forces seems associated with disastrous results.

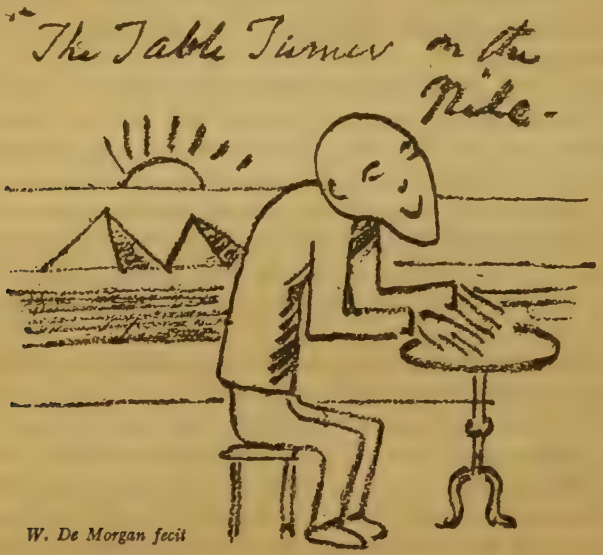
I can only repeat that, personally, I remain severely ghost-proof, while I cling to the comfortable conviction that phantoms are located in the minds of those who see them, and that electric light has done more to dissipate them than any priestly exorcist. Still more, all such shadowy tales from a vague Beyond serve but to endorse the dictum of William De Morgan that "*Annihilation, looked at rightly, is a very great luxury.*"

CHAPTER XVI

A Tale that is Told

I

MENTION of the Supernatural leads one by an inevitable sequence of ideas to William De Morgan, the son of a mother with a strong Spiritualistic bias, and of a father, the first scientist in modern times to devote any serious attention to phenomena which in his day were either scoffed at or believed to derive direct from the Infernal Regions.



As is well known, it was in 1906 that De Morgan published his first novel, *Joseph Vance*. The following letter to me contains some reminiscences of that event:—

Sir William Barrett, F.R.S., to Mrs. Stirling.

"I had known his family, of course, his mother and his sister (Mary)—the latter was brilliant, but externally a harder nature and a different type to William, whom I found uniformly fascinating. She was antagonistic to psychical research, and usually made game of it all; although the Preface written by her father, Augustus De Morgan, to his

wife's book, *From Matter to Spirit*, is one of the cleverest articles on the subject I have ever read.

"When we were out in Florence, in 1915, one day our hostess said: 'There are two people coming to dinner to-night, but I shall not tell you who they are.' When they arrived they proved to be the De Morgans, and I was charmed with both. 'Have you entirely given up the pottery?' I asked him. 'It has given me up!' he explained; 'but I am very interested at the moment in the construction of a by-cycle (so he pronounced it), and he described the mechanism of this invention with enthusiasm, afterwards sending me the photograph of the machine he had designed.

"'If it is all you represent it, there is surely money in it?' I said; but, characteristically, *that* point of view did not appear to interest him at all!

"Later he observed: 'I am doing a bit of scribbling too—just to amuse myself.' 'Will it be published?' I asked. 'Oh,' he exclaimed, evidently very much amused at the idea, 'I have been induced to send it to a particular publisher, but I don't suppose anything will come of it.'—Our hostess here interrupted: 'I have read it, and it is a most remarkable book.'

"By and by I saw some enthusiastic reviews appearing in the papers and I exclaimed: 'This must be the novel William De Morgan was writing when we were out in Florence.' I sent for *Joseph Vance*, and could not put it down."

Sir William Barrett subsequently discussed the extreme care which De Morgan took to be accurate in all he wrote. Every incident which the novelist described, whether dealing with medical, scientific, or mechanical matters, he referred to some expert on that particular subject to ensure that his fiction was in strict accordance with fact. Thus to Sir William, as head of the Psychical Research Society, he naturally submitted his descriptions of the ghosts in *Alice-for-Short*; and although of the correspondence which ensued only one letter has survived, as it is characteristic, I will transcribe it here.

William De Morgan to Sir William Barrett, F.R.S.

1, The Vale, King's Road, Chelsea, *Sept. 28th*, 1909.

My dear Barrett,—

I am very glad you approve of my treatment of Alice's ghosts (they are the most conspicuous phenomena). I tried to bring them into accord with these tales *as told*, and I leave it open whether in the story they were not due to illusion, semi-fibs, etc.

Some fools would account to themselves sufficiently for the lady with the spots by saying "Alice was a child," and

would be quite content to dispose of the eighteenth-century tale as a coincidence. People do!

Thank you so much for inviting us to Wicklow. But after huge confusions of a change of residence here, we shall be off to Florence. We are turned out here after twenty odd years!

I suppose we are all beginning (at last) to feel the hand of Time. I merely take no notice.

Yours always,
WM. DE MORGAN.

By and by when De Morgan attained his seventieth year he wrote, "Yesterday I became a septuagentleman," and he adds plaintively "*Lumbago lumbactum est!*" Otherwise *I merely take no notice* remained to the last his attitude in regard to the vagaries of Time.

I may perhaps add a story which Sir William told me had amused De Morgan from its economic standpoint. "Once when I was driving in Ireland," said Sir William, "I came upon a curious sight. About thirty or forty deal coffins were standing on end outside a shop in gruesome array. 'What on earth are these for?' I inquired from the proprietor of an adjacent shop whom I rightly adjudged to be an undertaker. 'Well, your honour,' was the reply, 'you see I made these for the workhouse, and they are all misfits. You'—enticingly—'can have the lot at a reduction!'"

At the time of the publication of *Joseph Vance*, in answer to an inquiry respecting the signatures of the names at Beppino's marriage, De Morgan gave an interesting side-light on his own view of the character of Vi, Lossie's sister. Vi, in the original uncondensed manuscript, was an elaborate study, who with her callous flirtations, her artificiality, her aping of the correctitudes, threw into much stronger relief the simple sincerity and unaffected charm of the opposing character Lossie.

William De Morgan to Miss Halsey.

Just a line to thank you for your kind appreciation of Joe.

I really begin to think, do you know, that there is something in it! I have several really *warm* reviews!

I believe that passage on p. 497 (*to think that such a page should exist!*) will bear close investigation, though I don't wonder you noticed it.

If it had been in England the register would have been signed by the parties. In Italy only the priest signs. Dick only saw the names, not Beppino's signed letter. Vi knew the signature perfectly, but *lied* about it! The incident is my last little bit of spite against unco' guidness and creed-bound respectabilities.

Many more thanks.

EVELYN DE MORGAN.
(From an amateur photograph.)

I have referred before to the curious anomaly presented in the character of William De Morgan by his mingled precision and casualness. In nothing perhaps was this more strongly exemplified than in an incident which occurred when he gave up the pottery.

The papers preserving the gist of his discoveries in ceramic work and of the ingredients employed by him were transcribed by him with clarity and accuracy; but, once committed to paper, the record, which represented the labour and the discoveries of a lifetime, was subsequently guarded with so little care that when he decided to bequeath this to the South Kensington Museum, it had vanished—destroyed, it was believed, as waste paper!

Nor was the event even regretted. De Morgan's indifference was approved by his wife; "It is a good thing," she said with satisfaction, "for now there will be no feeble imitators!" In this, perhaps, she was too sanguine; and as certain of the recipes have recently been discovered by me among a mass of papers which had no connection with them, they will be published according to her original intention. Meanwhile I can state authoritatively that all who profess to give the so-called "secret" of the De Morgan pottery, or who quote information respecting it, derived second-hand, are not to be relied upon.

II

Mention of De Morgan recalls to me his interest in an incident which I retailed to him, and which, with his love of the abnormal, he said he would make a fitting episode in one of his future novels.

Staying on the South coast, my husband heard that a farmer was residing in the neighbourhood who had formerly lived near his home when a boy; so one afternoon we walked over to see this man. He proved to be a good-looking powerful fellow between forty and fifty years of age, of a superior type, well-educated and a keen sportsman; and he sat talking to us most agreeably in his comfortable parlour. The house was a lonely old farm looking out on a secluded lawn with an ancient dovecot, picturesque but very isolated, and I noticed that, a solitary bachelor, he did not appear to have any servant on the premises.

Suddenly, after we had been talking for a considerable time, in the midst of a commonplace conversation, the man remarked loudly and inappropriately: "*Bow-wow! bow-wow! bow-wow!*" after which he lapsed into complete silence.

My husband, amazed, made various remarks, but received no reply; the man appeared stupefied and took no further notice of our presence. A feeling of terror came over me, as I concluded he was mad, and I realized the intense isolation of the house, that we were far away from the high road, with apparently not a soul within call, and a maze of shrubbery lying between us and the

entrance gate. "Come away!" I whispered urgently to my husband, but he seemed too completely puzzled to stir.

"Have we said anything to annoy you?" he questioned the stolid figure in perplexity; and then at last, unable to elicit any answer, he finally held out his hand in farewell—"Won't you even say good-bye?" but the man seemed neither to see nor hear us, although he eyed us unwinkingly with a curious, sullen stare.

"Come away!" again I urged; "he's *mad*!" and realization suddenly dawning on my husband, we both slipped stealthily from the room, closing the door behind us. Then followed a few awful moments which seemed an eternity. Dusk was falling and the long passage outside the room, unlighted by any window, was in pitch darkness. We had come in by a garden door, and we could not recollect in what direction there was an exit. We groped about, listening nervously for any sound from the room we had left, and realizing our complete helplessness if the madman should follow and attack us. At length to our unbounded relief we felt the knob of a door-handle beneath our touch. We next noiselessly undid a massive chain which further secured the lock, and a few minutes later we found ourselves safely back upon the public road.

"But what happened?" repeated my husband, still bewildered. "The man was talking civilly and rationally, and then that sudden awful transformation!"

"Thank heaven we got away!" I rejoined.

But, by and by, commonsense re-asserted itself. We recognized that we had run away in cowardly fashion when the man might be ill, he might have had a stroke—in any case we had no right to leave him without investigating the mystery. So after tea we got help, and walked back again two miles to his house.

As we stole up the gravel drive once more, not without trepidation, a ruddy light gleamed from the parlour window, and creeping up softly through the laurels, we peeped in.

There sat our friend by the light of a rosy lamp and roaring fire, having a comfortable tea and looking the very picture of placid well-being. We knocked at the front door and he appeared promptly. "Oh, it's Mr. and Mrs. Stirling again?" he observed genially—"do come in!"

"We came back to see if you were all right—are you quite well?" questioned my husband.

"Perfectly," was the surprised reply. "Why should you fear I was ill?"

"But we were here this afternoon and you did not seem well when we left!"

Again the man looked astonished. "You called. . . . of course . . . . a most pleasant visit—a great honour. But I don't seem to remember your going. Perhaps you never did go? But how is it you are *outside* the house?" For the first time he

looked worried; then he added with an effort: "Anyhow, do come in and have some tea."

We declined firmly and wended our way home, still mystified. It was not till afterwards we ascertained the explanation of this strange episode. Apparently normal in mind and body, he was yet subject to attacks in which the blood suddenly left the brain, when he either became instantly unconscious or mentally unbalanced. The attacks varied in length, but were usually of short duration, and on their cessation his mind resumed its proper activity save that he had no recollection of the intervening period. So suddenly did they come on, too, that he had been known to fall like a log from his horse in the hunting field; but despite the fact he insisted on leading an active life and living alone.

I remember an equally creepy episode which occurred once when my mother advertised for a butler. A very respectable and attractive man answered the advertisement and she interviewed him in the dining-room, where she was finishing luncheon. He guaranteed the highest references—"but I am afraid ma'am," he added with a smile, "I have been in rather a peculiar situation! I was butler and valet to the head of a Lunatic Asylum, and that was the reason why I left. It is a terrible thing to feel you are the only sane person amongst a set of people who are out of their minds, and I really found it getting on my nerves."

"I can quite understand that," said my mother; and he proceeded to give her an interesting account of the idiosyncrasies of the patients with whom he said he used sometimes to go out walking to assist the keepers.

Suddenly, as he was talking, my mother saw his glance stray towards a large carving knife which was lying on the table, and a very peculiar expression came into his eyes. Then she saw his hand steal out furtively in the direction of the knife, and next, as furtively, it was drawn back again.

She rose and ended the interview abruptly; but none the less she wrote to the man's former master to make inquiries, and the answer was as follows:

"I fear that I cannot recommend your engaging John Jones. It is a very sad case, as he was an intelligent and respectable man. But he was here as a *patient*, not as a servant; and his worst symptom was his believing himself to be sane!

"Although we have had to discharge him, I think it right to say that he has suffered from homicidal tendencies."

A story of a very different type likewise appealed to De Morgan. It was told to me by the late Lady McClintock, widow of Admiral Sir Leopold McClintock, the arctic explorer.

She had a very beautiful aunt, Mary, to whom, when a girl, wintering in Rome, a young Italian became most deeply attached. He was a man of ancient family and handsome appearance,

and was intending to enter a Cavalry regiment. He was fond of dancing and gaiety, and in all the smartest, fastest society in Rome. The young lady, however, did not reciprocate his affection ; and by and by she left Italy and heard no more of him. Later she married.

Many years afterwards, Lady McClintock, travelling in Italy, wished to visit the Vatican. Much to her surprise, the Pope received her in a private audience at which he was peculiarly gracious to her and her friends, and took infinite pains to make suggestions and plans for rendering her sojourn in Rome agreeable. When in the course of conversation she endeavoured to thank him, he observed : " There is nothing which I would not do for anyone bearing the name of McClintock, for the sake of one who was once very dear to me. Tell me, are you any connection of the beautiful Miss Mary whom I used to know ? "

Only gradually did it dawn upon Lady McClintock that in the aged Autocrat of the Vatican she beheld the former lover of her pretty aunt, the once dashing young Italian whose broken heart had led him to renounce the world and thus eventually to ascend the throne of St. Peter !

III

Coming home one day in a violent thunderstorm I found a tall, white-haired man of handsome appearance sheltering upon the doorstep. The rain was torrential, and the flashes of lightning incessant, so I at once invited the stranger to come inside. As he entered the dining-room he exclaimed, looking at one of the pictures, " Ah, I see you have a Spencer-Stanhope ! " " Yes," I replied, " Spencer-Stanhope was my uncle." He crossed the room ; " and I see you have a De Morgan ! " " Evelyn De Morgan was my sister." " And De Morgan pottery——" he added. I wondered who the Unknown might be during the ensuing hour while, in Cimmerian blackness and to the incessant growls of thunder, we had a delightful talk on art and literature. When at last the storm had abated and he took his leave he observed : " I knew both your uncle and your sister and if you care to know who I am, go to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and in such and such Departments you will see my work ! "

Such was my first introduction to Dr. Philip Norman, F.S.A., a striking personality both physically and mentally, whose name is so closely associated with that of William Morris and other celebrated men of his generation. " I wish another storm might blow more of your description to my doorstep ! " I remarked to him once when he had been regaling me with some interesting anecdotes.

" Andrew Lang," he replied, " used to say there were only forty-three stories in the world, and of those seventeen were not

fit for ladies! If you quote that," he added, "remember how important it is to get the numbers accurately!"

Of a different physique, frail and ethereal in appearance during the latter years of his life, was Mr. Cobden-Sanderson, famous for his association with the Doves Press. Not long after my first meeting with him, he sent me the following letter:

15 Upper Mall,
Jan. 2nd, 1921.

Dear Mrs. Stirling,—

I had meant to call yesterday to wish you a happy New Year, and to thank you for the many pleasures which, writing only for the general public, you unawares gave very particularly to myself. . . . I think I have told you that at the marriage of Lady Bridget to Lord Airlie, Lord Airlie gave me with great pride your life of *Coke of Norfolk* to read. It so fascinated me that I asked Lady Airlie to give me an introduction to the Leicesters, and armed with this introduction I went to Holkham and, putting up at the Hotel Victoria, made thence, with the kind assistance of Ld. Leicester, excursions and explorations all about, living in and with, as far as a spectator might, the great old times and personalities dealt with in your book.

These made, Ly. Leicester lent me your other book, and made me acquainted with Cannon Hall.

Imagine then the pleasure I owe to you, and it was for this that I wanted to thank you on the New Year's first day; also to say what a value had been set upon them all by our introduction to yourself, so closely and personally related to all that had gone before. . . .

And now I must add yet another great pleasure to us, prolonged over many nights, reading the letters, listening to the conversations, staying in the country houses, and joining in the general life of the last century in your charming *Letter-Bag of Lady Elizabeth*. How I should have liked to have seen this delightful lady, indeed—whom not, in that gay world all silent now?

It is impossible in memory ever to dissociate the writer from the attractive riverside home where he lived. The quaint old house with its garden of gnarled apple-trees stretching to the river-bank, with its relation to the famous Doves Press and to far older historical landmarks, seemed a fitting setting to the figure of its picturesque inmate, clad usually in a blue smock with some gaily-coloured shawl cast about his shoulders. He loved the ancient house, with its old-world surroundings, and expatiated to me on its unique atmosphere. "To pull this house down would

be to destroy something elusive they could never restore; let me show you what I mean." And in each room he pointed out how, framed in each window, was an entirely different prospect of the river—each, in itself, an exquisite, evanescent impression, ever-varying in mystery and in intensity of light and shade. "Destroy this house, and you destroy each of these for ever. One uniform vista of the river remains, but these individual pictures with their peculiar charm, and their changing, haunting beauty, would be lost for ever."

In all things, both in art and nature, and in the craft in which he was a past-master, Mr. Cobden-Sanderson had a wonderful eye for effect combined with precision; and it is sad to think that one more interesting figure from the past has now joined "that gay world all silent now" about which he wrote so charmingly.

A very different personality was "Tommy" Gibson Bowles, M.P., who suddenly wrote to me one day when I was away in Norfolk.

> DEAR MADAM,—
>
> I have been reading again your admirable book *Coke of Norfolk* and am more than ever impressed by the value of the work and the efficiency of the writer. I am anxious to have an article by the same hand for the *Candid Quarterly*, proving, if possible, by statistics that production in British agriculture can still be made to keep pace with population. Can you oblige me?

I declined, explaining that I was away for a holiday far from reference-books and statistics. But Mr. Bowles would take no refusal; again and again he wrote, till reluctantly I complied, only stipulating that no subsequent alteration should be made in the article without my consent. On receipt of it, however, he expressed enthusiastic satisfaction: "There is not a word," he wrote back, "which I could possibly wish to alter."

One day in London he suddenly invaded me. I found him small, volcanic, interesting, but possibly too much of the egotist and too curt of speech to be attractive as a superficial acquaintance, though those who knew him discovered in him a loyal and valued friend.

"That article which you kindly wrote for me," he explained, "is delayed till next quarter; but," waving his hand, "if you prefer payment——"

"Certainly!" I rejoined.

He looked both surprised and unreasonably annoyed. "It is not customary to pay till publication," he said.

"It was your own suggestion!" I reminded him in some amusement.

A few days afterwards he wrote to point out that I had mis-stated the number of words in the article which—in a large sum—

would make a difference only of about eight shillings less on the total due to me. "When I hear from you that you concur, I will send you a cheque," he concluded firmly.

I did not concur. I sent him my typist's bill specifying the exact number of words for which I had paid her; but it had no effect. The cheque arrived with eight shillings deducted! and when the article appeared I found that words to that pecuniary value had also been deleted. On my remonstrating, he said they "seemed to favour Protection!"

The episode was, I was told, characteristic. Mr. Gibson Bowles never swerved from a conviction once formed, and was essentially devoid of what Sydney Smith called "frill" in manner—a defect in which the merry Canon affirmed we specialize as a nation. "Mr. So-and-so," Sydney Smith used to say "has excellent sense, but I never knew a manner so entirely without frill!"

Certain editors, however, are prone to sin in one respect, that of "accepting" MSS. to keep them in reserve, thus leaving the author in the position of being unable to offer his work elsewhere or to claim payment so long as it remains unpublished. I was having tea one day with a prominent editor, when I noticed in his office a large chest which I remarked looked like a sarcophagus. "It *is* a sarcophagus," he said, "in that it is full of MSS. and I don't suppose any of them will ever see daylight!" Yet an analogous case would be if a man were to "purchase" a picture and refuse to pay the artist on the plea that he had not yet hung it upon his walls.

IV

An amusing raconteur was the witty journalist Charles Jerningham, "Marmaduke"—or, as I once told him he should have been named—Mutilator, of *Truth*. In the latter days of his life, shrunken, spare and delicate, he had nevertheless a fund of inexhaustible anecdote, and to the last told a story inimitably, though not always with strict veracity—his wit and his imagination were apt to take the bit between their teeth while stories poured from him without a pause, each fresh tale "going one better" than its precursor.

He once told me that in the late 'seventies he was staying at Westwood in the Isle of Wight with Wilfred Ward, whose father, a celebrated leader of the Tractarian Movement and afterwards Editor of the *Dublin Review*, was then alive. The house-party of about twenty people included Alfred Tennyson and his two sons. "In those days," related Mr. Jerningham, "I had my nomination from the Duke of Cambridge for the Grenadier Guards, and I did not think therefore much of poets or *literati*; but, wanting to be civil before dinner, on the first night I said to the young Tennysons that I was a very great admirer of their father's poetry, especially of 'Maud.'

"The fact was that one of the last prizes I got before leaving Stoneyhurst was Tennyson's works, a set of small volumes, bound in green cloth and fitting into a little green box. I had dipped into these volumes and skimmed a part of 'Maud.'

"At night, when we had all gone to bed, and I was half-undressed in my bedroom, there was a knock at my door and in came Tennyson. He told me that his sons had repeated to him what I had said, and he thanked me so very much for having paid him the compliment of liking his poetry; and to me, in my half-clothed, shivering state, he proceeded to spout the whole of 'Maud' from beginning to end!"

Another story Mr. Jerningham related with zest was how a certain ardent fox-hunter used to ask his friends down to Leicestershire and put them up at the local hotel. On one occasion Sir Richard—— was of the party, and in the morning his host expressed to him the conventional hope that he had passed a comfortable night and slept well. Sir Richard, however, seemed in a far from amiable frame of mind, and replied uncivilly: "No, I am afraid I was very uncomfortable indeed, and very cold. The bed was exceedingly hard, and I had scarcely any bed-clothes on me!" The host at once assured him that he would see this did not happen again, and promptly went off to complain to the hotel-keeper. "Well, sir," responded the latter much injured, "it is surely not *my* fault if Sir Richard preferred to sleep out in the passage with nothing on but a white necktie and a pair of lavender kid gloves!"

Another yarn was as follows: "Lord C. got a friend of his to put down for a club, to which Lord C. personally did not belong, a man who was known to them both. Soon after the election Lord C. met the friend who had proposed the candidate and asked him how the election had gone off. The latter answered, 'He was unanimously blackballed.' Lord C. exclaimed: '*Unanimously?* —Surely there must have been one vote for him—yours?' 'Oh no,' was the rejoinder, 'I did my duty to my friend in proposing him; my duty to my club in blackballing him!'"

"In what are now called the good old times," he also said, "Lord Houghton was at a public dinner at which Abraham Hayward was to answer the toast of 'Literature.' Hayward was sitting next to Houghton, and by the time that he should have spoken, had his head leaning upon the table, very drunk! So Lord Houghton was asked to make the speech instead of him, and he began in this way:

"'*My friend has drunk deep*' . . . (eyeing Hayward and making a long pause)—'*has drunk deep*' . . . (another pause) 'at the Spring of Hippocrene' etc., etc.; and then continued the speech without moving a muscle amid the uproarious laughter which greeted this sally.

"I happened," said Jerningham, "to be at a party at Mr.

Gladstone's official residence in Downing Street upon the night that Hayward died, and seeing Lord Houghton sitting by himself on the landing upon the first floor, I went up to him and said, 'Please forgive me, but I feel I must express my sympathy with you in the loss you have suffered by the death of Mr. Hayward.' Lord Houghton, with his head bent upon his chest through drink, answered, 'How very kind of you, my dear boy . . . ah, poor Hayward . . . He was always drunk!'"

(In extenuation of this story it must be borne in mind that those were times when inebriety was still the especial prerogative, if not the distinguishing mark, of a gentleman. I remember an old man, Mr. Shand, telling me that in his youth he so greatly disliked the after-results of a convivial evening, that he determined to remain sober; but he had to *feign* being drunk, and to subside under the table in orthodox fashion in order to escape the imputation by his companions of being a cad and a fellow too low for their society.)

Mr. Jerningham was a great collector of old furniture and *objets d'art*, and I think it was he who told me the following tale about a noted connoisseur in ivories. Visiting the Zoo one day, this learned man was observed to be studying a live elephant with the greatest attention, and at last solemnly he pronounced his conclusion: "The tusk this side is all right; it is early fifteenth century. But that on the other is unquestionably a fake!"

Mr. Jerningham assured me one day that he had had the following story direct from Kennedy Jones. When the *Daily Mail* was under contemplation—a few weeks, in fact, before it actually made its appearance—Kennedy Jones went to Alfred Harmsworth's room at the office and said, "My dear Alfred, on board ship there is always a Captain and a Cabin-boy; I do not mind whether I am Captain or Cabin-boy—but it is for you to decide which you will be and for me to be what you wish me!"

Alfred Harmsworth thought for a moment, and then answered: "I will be Cabin-boy; you Captain."

For over a week, he said, Kennedy Jones told him he never went to bed once, or even changed his clothes—he worked day and night until the first copy of the paper was issued.

Jerningham once said to me: "All one wants in literature is a catchy title—what follows it is of small importance! I could give you a dozen excellent titles in a few minutes"; and he proceeded to reel off a series of gems without pause. So successful was he in this particular art that he signed many advantageous contracts with publishers on the strength of titles alone, and not one word of the projected books ever fructified!

I never knew anyone who had such a fund of inextinguishable spirits. Not long before his death, frail, ill and old he said to me: "I love my life, and enjoy every moment of it. I don't want to

die—I have no use for Death ! " and about a fortnight later I heard that he was dead.

Mr. Jerningham's opinion of the importance of a title was endorsed by another writer. Mr. Broadley once brought out a book called *Three Dorsetshire Captains* and it hung fire—an obvious failure. He thereupon asked his publisher if, at his own expense he might change the title, and he re-named it *Nelson's Hardy*. Forthwith the book was an unqualified success.

Most of the literary men I have met have been gifted with a keen sense of humour. I remember Colonel Andrew Haggard, brother of Sir Rider Haggard, and himself a well known soldier and *littérateur*, receiving a letter asking for the character of a Scottish maid who had been in his service. It was in the days before the dole ; and the lady asked so many questions and appeared so particular that he answered somewhat caustically :

> Dear Madam,—
>
> Maggie Malcolm is a human woman, and not the Archangel Michæl, and I think would be capable of undertaking all you require in the former capacity.

The lady was so pleased with this reply that she asked him to shoot with her husband, and struck up a life-long friendship.

Mr. Bassett Haggard, another brother, had a more grim sense of humour if one may judge by the following story, worthy of a Grand Guignol, which he used to tell. When the late Lord Jersey was Governor of New South Wales, an official visit was paid to one of the penal settlements, and a band, played by the convicts, performed on this occasion. One of the men, a French convict, who took a prominent part in the music, was of such attractive appearance and possessed of such delightful manners, that general curiosity was roused to know for what possible crime such a charming individual could have been convicted. At length someone ventured to put the question to the man who, smilingly reminiscent, replied without emotion :

" My wife had a lover. I murder him. I take out his heart ; I fry it ; I give it to her for supper. When she has thoroughly enjoyed her repast—*tiens !*—I tell her what she have been eating ! *Voilà tout !* "

G. K. Chesterton, the arch-jester of modern literature, has evolved a variant on the quality predominant in Oscar Wilde—the rôle of *moqueur*—so that even when he is apparently dealing with a subject in a spirit of seriousness one has an uncomfortable sensation that he is all the while laughing at one's simplicity. His good nature is, however, proverbial, and I trust he will forgive my mentioning the manner of my first meeting with him.

Dining at Mr. John Lane's, I was paired off with Mr. Chesterton ; and while waiting for dinner to be announced, he took a seat beside me nearly in the centre of the room. I was feeling peculiarly tired and stupid, totally unequal to cope with such a brilliant conversationalist ; but I soon found, to my relief, this was entirely unnecessary. Mr. Chesterton began talking, and talked without a pause. Phrases, sophistry, paradoxes, epigrams poured from him in one bewildering stream—scintillating, continuous—so that it was totally unnecessary on my part to make even a feeble attempt at any rejoinder. And as he talked, the chair on which he sat cracked and cracked alarmingly. In a glass opposite I caught sight of the massive physique of the man beside me and my own comparatively insignificant person, and I hoped that when the inevitable occurred, I might be spared. . . . At length the crisis arrived . . . the chair swayed and splintered. Mr. Chesterton arose. But not for the fraction of a second did he cease speaking. His talk continued to flow uninterruptedly, leisurely, imperturbably while his hostess rushed forward, removed the *débris*, and substituted another chair. Then, without appearing to notice so trifling an incident, he reseated himself, still conversing. . . .

Soon after, we went in to dinner ; and as we sat down again the chair which he occupied began to crack ominously ; but Providence was merciful, and it held out.

I soon understood that no passing incident, however disturbing, can distract Mr. Chesterton's attention while his brain is following some intricate maze of thought. He is, moreover, a law unto himself. He is no *poseur*. His wit, his aphorisms, the workings of his brilliant, restless mind are entirely spontaneous. His thoughts seem to bubble up irresistibly from a well which never runs dry.

In contradistinction I recall a tale of a *poseuse* of bygone days which was told to me by Mrs. Charles King. Her father, Mr. James Mure, who was already an old man while she was still a young girl, could remember in his youth having met the great Mrs. Siddons staying in a country house. Like all who encountered the famous tragédienne, he was struck by her pompous affectation ; and with the impudence of the very young, he asked her blandly, " Why do you always talk of ' the wynd ' (wind) in ordinary conversation ? " Whereupon she turned to him and declaimed in a deep, stentorian voice which drew upon him the attention of the entire room :—

> I can find it in my mynd to call it wynd.
> I cannot find it in my mĭnd to call it wĭnd.

Mrs. King also gave me the following tale of twenty years ago, which, as it may be unknown to most of the present generation, I will venture to transcribe.

An artist who had spent several months on repairing the pro-

portions of an old and very historic Church sent in his account in a lump sum, but the churchwardens refused to settle with him until he had given them all details of the work accomplished. He did so, in the following list of items :—

BILL.

	£	s.	d.
Corrected the Ten Commandments	5	10	0
Embellished Pontius Pilate and put a new ribbon in his bonnet	1	0	0
Put new tail on rooster of St. Peter and mended his comb	1	5	0
Re-plumed and gilded a wing of the Guardian Angel	7	15	0
Washed the servant of the High Priest and put carmine on his cheeks		10	0
Renewed Heaven, adjusted the stars and cleaned the moon	3	5	0
Reanimated flames of Purgatory and restored souls	1	7	6
Revived the flames of Hell, put a new tail on the Devil, mended his left hoof and did several small jobs for the damned	4	16	6
Put new spotted dashes on Son of Tobias and dressing on his sack	15	6	0
Cleaned ears of Balaam's ass, and shod him		14	0
Put earrings in ears of Sarah	1	6	0
Put new stone in David's sling; enlarged head of Goliath, extended his legs	2	5	0
Decorated Noah's Ark	3	0	0
Mended shirt of Prodigal Son and cleaned his nose		15	6
	£48	15	6

A reminiscence of Mrs. King's own childhood was as follows. Sir David Dundas, the famous Judge Advocate-General and Privy Councillor, who was an exceedingly popular man about town in the last century, was a great friend of her father, both at school and Oxford. It was his frequent habit to turn up in the morning at their house in London, where he was always welcome, as he was a man who was noted for his own wit, and his appreciation of wit in others.

"One morning," she relates, "he told a story against himself. Lord Wensleydale, also a witty Lord of Session, had asked Sir David to dine with him in London on the following Wednesday, that being the off-day at the House when Members were free. Sir David wrote back saying he regretted much not being able to accept, but that Lord Wensleydale was the seventh Peer who had already asked him for that day! Lord Wensleydale replied in these words :

> "'Seven Cities claim the birth of Homer dead
> Thro' which the living Homer begged his bread!
> Seven Peers now offer David bread
> Who would not care a damn were David dead!'

"I was present as a young thing of twelve when Sir David read out these lines to my father, and I shall never forget the delight of the two old friends at the retort!"

A repartee which was equally apt was once made to Sir Frederick Bramwell. He was asked to speak on Applied Science at a great

dinner, but it was 1 a.m. before his turn arrived, so he rose and said:

"The only problem in Applied Science which at the moment appeals to me is the application of a match to a match-box and the result to a hand-candle."

Russell Lowell, sitting near, turned a menu-card to the blank side and wrote:

> "Oh, great Sir Frederick, would that all could catch
> Your happy humour and supply its match!"

Another witty rejoinder was made by John Bull, D.D., Canon of Christ Church and Exeter, who was born in 1789 and died in 1858. Mr. Spiers Matthews Hughes, whose father was the Canon's first cousin, told me that Lord Palmerston offered Dr. Bull the Bishopric of Oxford, but, feeling himself too old, the Doctor declined it in the following terms:

"No, no, my Lord; I have signed my name 'John Bull' too long now to change it to 'John Oxon'!"

Mention of Lord Palmerston recalls to me a recollection of Westminster School told me by Mr. Arthur Mure.

"Dr. Scott, head master of that famous seminary for many years, was a tall, thin-faced man, with a fiery, eruptive complexion, also fiery red hair, in later life tinged with grey, which seemed curiously typical of his own restless, clever, but extremely volcanic temperament. A famous scholar, he was full of kind-hearted impulses, but was often guilty of gross rudeness of manner, his tactless remarks being hurled indiscriminately at men in high places with whom he happened to disagree; and this despite the fact that often such victims of his caustic tongue were those in a position to make or mar his chance of promotion in the Church. Special point, however, seemed to be given to such remarks by the fact that they were uttered in a voice which always sounded as though it came much more from his nose than from his mouth.

"His amused but admiring Sixth Form boys likewise received cutting satires from him in every case where some feeble answer on their part gave a loophole for the exercise of sarcasm; but one peculiarity of Scott was that while for any caustic remark addressed to his pupils he was distinctly apologetic the following day, with his under-masters this was never the case, and he seemed uniformly to regard them with a supreme contempt.

"On one occasion Scott had asked a master to take in hand some special form of duty, and the master replied politely that he would be very glad to do so. 'I don't care tuppence,' roared Scott in his nasal twang, 'whether you are *glad* or not—I only want to know if you will do it or not!'

"I remember, too, on the occasion of Lord Palmerston's funeral, I was present with the rest of the forty Queen's Scholars as part of

the collegiate body, commanded by Dr. Scott and a master of the college—the latter a tall, solemn, highly nervous, kindly soul. We were grouped near the grave, the two masters in front of us. The moment was a solemn one. The approaching tramp of the coffin-bearers was already heard in the silence, even above the distant murmur of the organ and choir. We held our breath, and you could have heard a pin drop, when suddenly our attention was diverted by a whispered remark from the nervous master of college inquiring if one of the bearers was not Lord So-and-so? Soft as was the question, it reached the quick ears of Scott.

"'Lord Fiddlesticks!' he roared in nasal tones which echoed through the Abbey, loud enough to reach the chief mourners—if not the dead man himself!

"A few years later the question arose respecting the transfer of Ashburnham House from the Dean and Chapter to the School. It faced Little Dean's Yard, and was the official residence of the Sub-Dean, at that time Lord John Thynne.

"Scott, who was naturally much interested in the matter, wanted to inspect the courtyard which lay between the house and Little Dean's Yard, and which was hidden from the latter by a high wall. Being Scott, however, he did not think it necessary to send a civil note to Lord John Thynne asking him for permission to inspect what he wanted to see, but decided, when under the impression that the Sub-Dean was away, to place a ladder against the wall, and, with an under-master standing at the bottom to steady it, to ascend and survey the property from that point of vantage. He therefore, in full head master's robes, performed this feat; but unfortunately Lord John, unknown to him, had returned the evening before, and from a window espied Scott's red face and cap and gown slowly emerge over the wall. Boiling with fury, despite the burden of his eighty years, Lord John raced down to the courtyard for all he was worth, and called out in a voice of thunder: 'Well, Dr. Scott, I consider the least you could have done was to wait till I am dead!' The argument was unanswerable, and Scott, for once nonplussed, though equally boiling with rage, descended from his high altitude with what dignity he could muster."

Some diverting recollections were told to me by Lady Alice Eyre, who wrote thus of her sojourn in Holland when her father was Minister there.

"During the time we were at The Hague, America sent there as her representative a Minister hailing from the Far West. We will call him Mr. Watkins, though that was not his real name. Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Watkins came to a party at the British Legation, at which the late King of Holland was present. My father took the new American Minister up to the King in order to present him, and my mother was just going to do likewise with Mrs. Watkins,

when Mr. W., who did not see why one should have any nonsense of that sort, exclaimed in a stentorian voice: 'King—Mrs. Watkins! Mrs. Watkins—King!' That was not the only funny episode that evening, for, shortly after, His Majesty, who had a sense of humour, called up the old English clergyman, who was the Chaplain of Legation, and introduced him to Mr. Watkins as the 'Legation Devil-catcher.'

"There came yet another Watkins-presentation episode next day when my mother took Mrs. W. to be presented to Queen Sophie, for when they had been there a little while, Mrs. W., feeling that she had had enough of it, rose to her feet, saying: 'Now, I won't detain you any longer, Ma'am.'

"On another occasion the King of Holland, going to unveil some statue, turned to an official and inquired if the statue was *équestre.* The man not understanding what on earth the King meant, replied cautiously: "*Eh bien, sire, je crois que c'est demi-équestre.*'

"One visitor of note while we were there was the future Kaiser William, then at the age of seventeen. He came with his father, mother and sisters. They were staying at Scheveningen, I think, but used to come to the Legation most days; and Prince William was never tired of questioning my father, who had been in the Navy before going into the Diplomatic Service, about English ships, their structure and every detail connected with them. He used to bring drawings of ships for my father to correct, and I have some of them still. My poor father, when he talked to him with pleasure, as he thought him an intelligent and interesting boy, little imagined what all this interest in the Navy on Prince William's part would one day lead to!"

V

A delightful raconteur was the late Lord Hotham. We used to exchange yarns, or, as my typewriter once cynically mistranscribed it—*yawns*; but I always remained the debtor, and my contributions were perhaps provocative of their nickname.

I remember his telling me a curious story of his ancestor, Twisden Hodges, who was enormously fat. This gentleman, who in his day was a gay and impecunious young blood, once attended a revel at Cremorne, and there ran into the bailiffs, who promptly arrested him for debt. But the victim pleaded earnestly to be allowed to enjoy the entertainment for a short time ere he accompanied his captors. "There is only one exit," he pointed out. "With my figure, I cannot quit the place without your seeing me. Let me have a little pleasure first!" The officers of the law, nothing loath to join in the festivities themselves, consented, but remained near the entrance, keeping a vigilant eye on all who left the grounds. The hours, however, passed and their captive did not return. At last

most of the guests had left, and becoming genuinely alarmed, they instituted a search throughout the place. It then transpired that there had been a balloon ascent during the evening, and Twisden Hodges had sailed away to safety many hours before!

I once remarked to Lord Hotham about some people who had a collection of spurious family portraits that they seemed "to have bought their ancestors by the ton."

"That's as it should be," he rejoined; "for ancestors should be *men of weight*!"

A more modern tale concerned one of the tenants on the Hotham estate in Holderness, Ryby Wright by name, who one day was observed by his wife to be sitting gazing into the fire with a very mournful expression. "Ryby," she said, "what are you thinking about?" "I am thinking, my dear, what epitaph I should put on your tombstone!" The lady, it should be remarked, was then in perfect health, and naturally resented this undue thoughtfulness. "Oh, that's very simple," she responded briskly. "Just—'WIFE OF THE ABOVE'!"

Lord Hotham was once getting up a tug-of-war on board ship, "Married *versus* Single," and he got many more "single" than "married." Anxious to complete the numbers, he espied a melancholy individual standing apart by the rail of the ship and hastened up to him. "Are you married?" he asked. "No—only seasick!" was the rejoinder.

Lord Hotham told me that his grandfather, when a boy at Westminster School, had a chum called Hook (afterwards the father of the famous Dean Hook of Chichester), a tall, thin, lanky lad, with straight black hair and a Stiggins-like appearance.

These two were strolling about the streets one Sunday afternoon, and happening to pass a small Dissenting Chapel in a side street, they turned in, out of idle curiosity, and sat down in a pew. The congregation had assembled, but there was no sign of a minister, and a little Elder was flitting up and down in much apparent perturbation.

Presently as he passed their pew, Hook took him by the sleeve and asked: "Has not the minister arrived?" "No!" "*I* have a few words of exhortation for the brethren!" rejoined Hook unctuously. This timely intervention of Providence overwhelmed the little Elder, who joyfully conducted Hook to the pulpit, where, after solemnly gazing round the chapel, he began in an antediluvian tone:

"In various parts of the Old Testament, my Brethren, you will find these words written: 'And the Lord spake unto Moses.' Now, my brethren, (with violent gesticulations and frenzied delivery), you must not suppose He spake unto him with His *voice*, for that would have confounded. He spake unto him (violently thumping the cushion) by *mechanical instruments and chemical preparations*"—

and so on for a half-hour or more of preposterous nonsense, but with such effect, owing to his vehemence, that at the finale, as he left the pulpit, the congregation sent the Elder to request that "the learned gentleman will kindly come and address us again next Sabbath!"

The son of the Hook of the last story became in later life Dean of Chichester, and was noted among other marked eccentricities, for a somewhat embarrassing habit of speaking his thoughts aloud quite unconsciously. "My brother-in-law, Edward R. Currie, afterwards Dean of Battle," related Lord Hotham, "at one time held a living at Chichester, and knew Dean Hook well, and was very fond of him. On one occasion they met at a dinner-party in a mutual friend's house, and were chatting together in the drawing-room while their fellow-guests assembled, when in sailed a lady of the *nouveau riche* order, resplendently dressed in a very decolleté gown. Dean Hook looked her up and down and exclaimed quite audibly: *'Oh, my!'* After her, sailed in her daughter, in an even more decolleté dress. Dean Hook gave *her* one look, exclaimed *'Oh, fie!'* and turned his back on her!

"Mr. Currie said it fell to his lot to take the luckless girl in to dinner, and the meal was half over before her neck and shoulders regained their natural whiteness!"

A somewhat similar episode occurred at a dinner-party in Dublin. Mrs. G., whose husband had made an immense fortune by manufacturing chemical manure, was wearing an extremely smart but very low dress. Mrs. John Atkinson, a noted wit, who was also there, remarked: "Sure, all she wants is a little of her husband's top-dressing!"

When I was staying at West Hill, in Hampshire, a pretty house which Lord Hotham rented for a time, he regaled me with anecdotes of a neighbour who was noted for her eccentricity, and who once sent him the present of a turkey. Something in the butler's face as he announced the arrival of the gift arrested Lord Hotham's attention, and he inquired: "It's not *alive*, I hope!" "Yes, my Lord," was the answer, and, going to the door, he discovered a brougham and pair, in which was seated, gobbling furiously, an enraged turkey-cock, which threatened all who approached it. This same lady had a curious habit of taking two bonnets when she went out to pay calls. She drove in an old one, and if she found her friends at home, she hurriedly donned her best. One windy day, however, seeing her footman's hat blow off into the water as she was driving over a bridge, she called out to him peremptorily: "John, John, you will catch cold in your head—you must put on my old bonnet instantly!" But the methods of mistresses, if kindly intentioned, were apt to be autocratic in the good old days, and the following colloquy was heard by a friend of mine between old Lady Aylesbury and her footman:

Lady A. Charles, you are not looking well to-day. You must take a pill to-night!

Charles (meekly). Very good, m'lady!

Lord Hotham had many amusing stories of the late Bishop Wordsworth, a very learned man, but extraordinarily absent-minded. At a dinner-party at the Palace one evening the Bishop offered to lend the lady sitting next to him an interesting book on some subject upon which they were talking, and after dinner he fetched the volume, but before handing it to her he remarked: "I think, perhaps, I had better write my name in it first!" "Well, Bishop," laughed the lady, "you seem to have rather a poor opinion of my honesty!" On which the Bishop, dimly realizing that he had made rather a *faux pas*, observed apologetically: "Well, you see, it is so easy to forget to whom a book belongs. Now, this book was lent to me years ago (busily writing his own name in it meanwhile) by a dear old friend of mine. But I have quite forgotten by whom!"

Lord Hotham was an eyewitness of the following incident at Bournemouth during the General Election of 1885. The Liberal candidate on that occasion was Sir Horace Davy, afterwards Lord Davy, who had been assiduously nursing the coveted constituency for two or three years, and spending money upon it freely. At one of the polling booths, a small crowd had assembled outside, Liberals on one side and Conservatives on the other, who respectively greeted the voters with cheers as they arrived, according to their colours. Presently, up drove an old fellow in a coster's donkey-cart, the donkey fairly smothered in Liberal colours, and the Liberal crowd, of course, set up a hearty cheer. When he came out after voting, the Liberal agent stepped confidently forward and asked him for his card. The old fellow lugged it out, turned round, and gave it to the Conservative agent. "Stop, sir," said the Liberal agent, "you have made a mistake. That gentleman is the Conservative agent. *I* am the Liberal agent."

"I knows that."

"But, sir," said the L.A., aghast, "you have not been and voted Tory surely? Look at your donkey's colours!" pointing to the gaily decorated beast.

"I am a Conservative, I am!" said the old man proudly. "*That there is a hass!*" Whereupon howls of delight arose from the Conservative bystanders.

Major-General Sir Hugh Drummond once successfully contested a Welsh constituency in the Conservative interest. After one of his meetings he was told that a man wished to speak with him. Out he went, wearing his most ingratiating manner, and expecting to find some Pressman wanting information. He found instead a truculent-looking individual who said: "Are you Drummond?"

"Yes," said Drummond, "what can I do for you?"

"Go to Hell!"

"Ah, no!" said Drummond sweetly. "I can't go there—I should not be popular. I have always heard it is the Radical head-quarters!"

At the General Election in 1922, Lord Hotham's elder daughter volunteered to drive voters to the poll for the Conservative candidate in a London constituency where there was a three-cornered election. She was sent in her little car, driven by herself, to a certain barracks, where she picked up three N.C.O. voters. On starting, one of them said to her: "Now, look 'ere, miss! If you gets us safe to the poll without running into anythink, we'll vote Conservative. But if you collides twice, we'll vote Liberal. And if you does it three times, we'll vote Labour." She, however, drove carefully and secured all three votes to the Conservative candidate.

In return for the latter yarn I exchanged the following equally veracious incident of the same election. Great anxiety was felt to know what would be the result of the newly acquired franchise for women. A lady who was canvassing went into a shop and asked the woman who owned it for her vote, but was met by a firm refusal.

"But I hope you are not going to give it to the other side?" protested the canvasser.

"I ain't going to give it to anybody!" was the decisive rejoinder.

"But that seems a great pity!" urged the canvasser plaintively.

"Well," returned the proud possessor of the vote, "I've only just had it given to *me*, and I ain't a-going to give it away again to nobody!"

Lord Hotham told me that the Bishop of Southwark personally related the following incident to Sir Percy Marling. In the summer of 1920 a great conclave of bishops from all over the world assembled at Lambeth. There was a big luncheon at which one Anglican bishop made a very long speech, in which he displayed great erudition, but was excessively prosy. When he at last sat down, an American bishop turned to the Bishop of Southwark, who was sitting next to him, and remarked thoughtfully: "Say! that hobo must have swallowed an encyclopædia and then taken an almighty strong emetic!"

I may add two more episcopal stories. Dean Inge was dining with the Bishop of London, and among others present was the Bishop of Winchester. Wine and liqueurs were handed round, and both London and Winchester waved them away. The Dean took champagne, port and liqueur. Then cigars were handed round. "No, thank you," said London. "Not for me," said Winchester. The Dean helped himself to a cigar, and, lighting it placidly, leant across to Sir Lewis Coward, K.C., and indicating his companions, observed deprecatingly: "But they have other vices!"

The Bishop of London again was said to figure in the follow-

ing incident. He had been salmon-fishing in the Highlands when two gillies were heard subsequently discussing his merits, and one of them remarked :

" He's a very nice gentleman, he is. But he do swear something dreadful."

" Swear ? " exclaimed the other, aghast ; " and him a bishop ! "

" Aye," responded the other. " A salmon started to rise, an' I axed him, ' Shall I row after that ere damned beggar, m'lord ? ' And he said, ' *Yes, do !* ' "

An equally Scottish story was told me about a certain peer who must be nameless, but who is a typical John Bull in appearance. One day after he had passed, two gillies were thus heard conversing :

" Yon's his Lor-r-rdship, the Ear-r-rl of——"

" Hoot mon"—witheringly—" yon's niver the Ear-r-l ! "

" I tell ye it's his Lor-r-rdship right enough ! "

" An' I tell ye it ain't. Yon's an adver-r-rtisement ! "

This was almost as cruel a misunderstanding as what occurred to Lady Milner. She told me that she was in an omnibus one day when inadvertently she got hold of the handle of the umbrella belonging to a woman seated next to her in mistake for her own. The woman pointed out the fact acidly—" *My* umbrella, if you please ! "—and Lady Milner, apologizing politely, hurriedly restored it to the rightful owner. In the course of an afternoon's shopping, she called at a shop where they had been re-covering an old umbrella of hers, and fetched it away. Returning home, she found herself in an omnibus opposite the same woman with whom she had travelled a few hours earlier. The latter, fixing a steely gaze on the *two* umbrellas which Lady Milner was now carrying, remarked significantly : " You have had *a good day*, I see ! "

An even harder fate befell a lady who, at a dinner-party recently, heard her host instructing the butler not to offer the champagne to her as she did not take it. " Oh, but I *do* drink champagne," she expostulated plaintively. " It is not the Temperance League which I have joined but the Purity League." " Ah," returned the host vaguely, " I knew you had given up *something*."

Another misunderstanding was essentially modern. Lady Napier recently allowed her ladysmaid, who had been with her for many years, to go to the Derby. An aeroplane, too high to be itself visible, was advertising the *Daily Mail* by smoke-writing in the sky. " And oh, my lady," said the maid on her return, " at first I thought it was the finger of God bearing witness against all our sins ! "

Mr. Warde Cook was one day walking through the streets of Boulogne with a lady whose pronunciation of the French language left much to be desired. " There," she observed, " comes a Sewer (Sœur) de Charité ! " " Ah," said Mr. Warde Cook, sympathetically, " I thought there was a nasty smell about ! "

A misunderstanding occasioned by the royal Princes in their extreme youth led to complications. A new governess had been engaged for the royal children, and on her arrival she was greeted by the Prince of Wales and his brothers with the eager inquiry, "Do tell us, are you a cock or a hen?" "That sounds rather rude," said the lady, much disconcerted. "What makes you ask such a question?" "Because," came the ready explanation, "we thought you must be one or the other, for we heard father say to mother you were 'no chicken!'"

Some years ago a mania arose for "book teas" and "town teas," at which each person by some simple device represented a book or a town that the other guests were expected to guess. Many of the disguises were ingenious. At one of the former teas I remember a girl going about with a photograph of the hostess round her neck, and the volume represented was, *Ought we to Visit Her*. Sir Frederick Bridge, with a little book slung from his coat, was *A Book on Bridge*; and another man with a padlock attached to his instep, was Locke on *The Human Understanding*. At a "town tea" I saw an elderly clergyman wandering about with a grass-green ribbon, indicating "Parson's Green," while a very hackneyed jest was a whole biscuit hung round the neck, representing "Nuneaton."

Variations upon these entertainments followed, and latterly a mania arose for inventing titles and authors of imaginary books; though this was too great a tax on the intelligence of the majority ever to become universally popular. One day Lord Hotham sent me the following original list, which I failed to rival:

List of Books not to ask for at the Library.

"My Second Hunger Strike," by Lena Still.
"Taters are Cheap To-day!" by Alf. A. Stone.
"A Barmaid's Romance," by Anna May Philpotts.
"Reflections of a Noddle," by M. T. Head.
"All that was Left to Him,"—Bob Tanner.
"The Muffin-man,"—Annabel Ringer.
"The Long, Long Journey,"—Onslow Trane.

Shortly afterwards, alas! our exchange of merry stories came to an end; but almost one of the last letters which he wrote to me before he died contained a witty, if pathetic, rejoinder to my plaint that, having just finished a book, I had joined the ranks of the unemployed.

MOST STIMULATING PERSON!

You bemoan yourself on being now "one of the unemployed." Allow me to suggest that, instead of applying for the "dole," you devote your talents for the benefit of the "doleful" and set up as a "Hump Specialist";—"Chronic

Cases of Blue Hump speedily cured by correspondence." I will furnish you with the highest testimonials! Joking apart, your letters have " bucked me up " more than all the doctors' stuff I have been religiously quaffing for the last six weeks. Nothing does one so much good as a good laugh, and you have given me several, for which I am deeply grateful.

And, in truth, Laughter remains the one thing which Death seems unable to extinguish. Tears, we understand, have ceased with life ; pain is obliterated ; those we have wept with are surely at peace, but those we have made merry with seem still with us at every turn, eager to share each jest, each quaintness which we can discover in this otherwise sad old world. Laughter, that gift of the gods, alone seems immortal. . . .

And still looking back through the drifting years at the friends whose merriment once made the sunshine of existence, I can only echo some lines which were repeated to me by Mrs. Charles King. Staying in a country house she met Sir Theodore Burke, (a relation of the Mr. Burke who was murdered with Lord Frederick Cavendish in Phœnix Park) and on her signing her name in the visitors' book when leaving he gave her the following verse to place under it :

" Tout passe avec le temps ;
Le temps passe lui-même ;
L'Eternité n'a pas de temps,
Et mon amitié le même ! "

CHAPTER XVII

Chrysanthemums and Bombs

GLANCING back, it seems to me that some of the most interesting people I have met are my Japanese friends, of whom I have a great number.

At a garden-party given in their honour I was introduced by Mr. Tokugawa to General Nogi and Admiral Togo, two of the most celebrated men of their generation. It was a day of uncertain weather with rain at intervals; and talking to Nogi through an interpreter, I apologized for the discourtesy of our English climate. Nogi proved himself equal to the occasion. "I have only one regret in regard to the English weather," he replied gallantly, "if it should damage your most lovely dress!" He was a tall man, dressed in mufti, with a pleasing, powerful countenance. Admiral Togo, on the contrary, had habitually a serious expression, and the Japanese expressed their surprise when they saw him laughing as he talked to us. My husband was relating how, while yachting, he had gone on board the training ship *Worcester*, on which the Admiral had been trained for the Navy, and where, as he told us, he had spent some of the happiest days of his life.

Some time afterwards a Japanese friend said to my husband at the Embassy, "I saw you and your wife in Japan." "But," he replied, "though we have often been invited there we have not yet been able to go." "Nevertheless, I saw you both," persisted the smiling Japanese; "You are this moment touring through Japan on the Cinematograph talking to General Nogi and making Admiral Togo laugh!"

Some weeks later General Nogi committed *hara-kiri*, and however with our Western training we may regard such an action, the splendid spirit of *bushido* which prompted it, and the devotion which animated the little wife who died with him, were such that to-day few of his countrymen can mention him without tears.

The Japanese are to me like a fairy people, so exquisite in their ideas, so dainty in their ways that they make Europeans appear clumsy and gauche in contrast. Those who come over here in the Diplomatic service are, of course, the cream of the nation, and men and women alike are clever and highly educated. I have known a Japanese lady arrive in London unable to write a word of English, and in a few weeks she would send me a letter, unaided, in perfect autograph and well expressed. This is the more

remarkable when one considers the difference of their calligraphy—painted in upright lines with a soft brush. But all ladies of the upper classes are very accomplished and appear to be naturally good linguists; the wife of a recent Consul General could converse fluently in eight different languages; and when I was having tea with her she talked in their native tongues, with equal ease, to English, Italian, French and Russian ladies who were present. Recently, too, I went to see a play written in English by a Japanese playwright to whom I was introduced. The dialogue, which occasionally was very beautiful, the author told me was his own unaided composition with but scanty subsequent correction of any of its phraseology by an English critic.

Among other accomplishments Japanese ladies at the Peeresses' School are taught, as an essential part of their education, the art of arranging flowers; and their paintings are likewise often extremely clever.

As a people, the Japanese appear to me singularly broadminded and free from the spirit of prejudice which disposes the Englishman to be contemptuous of opinions other than those with which habit has made him familiar. The Japanese, on the contrary, are always inquiring, always learning; while in Religion and Philosophy they weigh without bias the faiths and conclusions of other nations. As craftsmen they are indeed reputed to be primarily imitative rather than original, and so far they have added little to the inventions and discoveries of science; but their Art is individual and distinctive; and it is greatly to be regretted if its exponents are beguiled from what is so beautiful and unique to become mere followers of European eccentricities. In literature their ideas are poetical; and in practical matters their swift intelligence leads them to conclusions with a rapidity calculated to surprise the slower-brained English.

The story is at least characteristic which relates how a Japanese gentleman, calling upon an English lady, at length took his leave with customary politeness, remarking: "I will not longer cock-croach upon your time."

"I think I have known you long enough," observed the lady, "to explain that we do not say *to cockcroach* but to *encroach*."

"Ah, I comprehend," exclaimed the quick-witted Japanese, "when I call upon a gentleman it is to *Cock*-croach; and when I call upon a lady it is to *Hen*-croach!"

I also heard, first-hand, a curious story of how twenty years ago Japanese medical knowledge was in advance of English. A well-known engineer who would prefer his name not to be mentioned, went to Japan on a big job, and while there died of typhoid. He was certified as dead by the English doctor, and had been lifeless for three days and nights when a most devoted Japanese nurse and doctor went to the English physician and begged permission

to try a certain experiment. "You may do as you like," was the reply; "the man is as dead as a door-nail!" The Japanese thereupon prepared a potent bandage, (one ingredient of which was said to be chloride of lime since the poor nurse in preparing it accidentally had her finger burnt to the bone,) and this bandage was applied round the middle of the body. The heart restarted, and the man who was dead is alive to-day, twenty years afterwards. He has since married, and is in his normal health.

Nevertheless, the strange part of the story is that although he took up life where he had laid it down, and resumed his work promptly, there are many who consider that he has been different in character ever since—in short that he came back a Japanese! And I have been interested to read recently that in an experiment in which animation was restored to a dog that had been dead forty-eight hours, the animal, although unchanged to outward appearance, was similarly altered in disposition. The body was apparently undamaged; but in some subtle way the individuality was transformed.

Many of the Japanese customs are so exactly the reverse of our own that they might appear to us reminiscent of "Alice through the Looking-Glass." For instance, members of the royal family do not lead conversation but only answer an observation addressed to them. This simplifies life for them, but renders it somewhat dull, as conversation on these lines swiftly flags; and I have seen a Royal lady for this reason left severely alone at parties while every one around her was chatting gaily to friends.

One day a Japanese Princess called upon us in London, and as the visit was a great civility on her part, I was naturally anxious to show her every courtesy in return. Unfortunately she spoke only two words of English, "Yes" and "No," which in any case limited the conversation to a series of disjointed remarks on my part, a long continuation of which was very exhausting. At the end of two hours I whispered to my husband, "I think she is too shy to leave. Do take her round, show her the pictures, and linger near the front door—give her every chance of going if she wishes!" He did so, and finally inquired if she liked English Art. "No," was the uncompromising answer, as to my despair, she re-seated herself; and my string of staccato remarks had to be resumed. Meanwhile I could see that my visitor also looked inexpressibly weary; at times she appeared almost inclined to cry; yet still she did not go. In brief, she had arrived at four o'clock and it was nearly eight when at last, I being almost in a state of collapse and every other guest departed, she rose up, looking very anxious, and took her leave.

I afterwards remarked to a Japanese friend on the abnormal length of that visit. "Ah, she does not understand your English

customs yet!" was the reply; "*She was waiting for you to tell her to go!*"

Again in contradistinction to our own ideas, selection or romantic affection on the part of a lady before marriage is almost tantamount to immorality. A Japanese lady whom we knew had her engagement broken off by her father on account of the delicate health of her fiancé, and soon afterwards was married to another man. Meeting an amateur palmist at our house who knew nothing of her previous history, the fortune-teller innocently remarked that there were signs in the lady's hands of a deep attachment to another man before she met her present husband. "Oh, no, no!" exclaimed the lady, horror-stricken at the insult.

And in yet another respect the Japanese ideas of modesty differ materially from our own.

A man I know who went to stay with a Japanese Lieutenant was invited to have a bath on the morning after his arrival, and found that *en route* he was waited on by smiling Japanese maidens who gradually removed and carried away every garment to which he vainly strove to cling; nor did their ministrations cease when he entered the bath. The latter, which was large and circular, had a heating apparatus beneath it, so that the water waxed gradually hotter and hotter, and when it had nearly reached boiling point, his embarrassment was accentuated, for the door opened and Mrs. Lieutenant and a group of little Lieutenants smilingly entered and, with many bows, joined him in his ablutions. Nor was the experience of an English lady visiting in Japan much happier. She had duly impressed upon the attendant servants that she desired privacy during her bath: "Above all, on no account are you to admit any gentleman!" she impressed upon them. Yet scarcely had she entered the water, than the door opened and a Japanese man came hurrying in. "Go away!" screamed the lady, shooing him off, to his obvious surprise; and afterwards she expostulated indignantly with the servants. "But that was only your back-washer!" they explained, wonderingly.

The Japanese, however, as is well-known, are an extremely cleanly nation, and some of them in London have baths four times a day "for pleasure." This is a curious contrast to the habits of the English of a century ago when few great houses could boast a bathroom at all; and I remember an uncle of mine telling me that, as a young man, many people would not invite him to stay with them, because he insisted upon a daily bath in his room, and it was considered both affected and a nuisance.

The Japanese Consul-General once asked my husband to tell him frankly what other nations considered the great national defect of the Japanese. The question was a delicate one, and my husband hesitated. At length he said, "If you really wish to know, I have heard that other nations complain that in trade the

Japanese merchants have not such a high ethical standard as the traders of other races. They are not so trustworthy. I have always heard that spoken of as your national defect." "Ah," exclaimed the Consul-General, "that is so, but we are changing all that. Foreigners do not understand that in Japan formerly, trade was only carried on by the lowest of the people. To be a tradesman was almost tantamount to being a criminal. No one expected a tradesman to be honest or to have any principles. Now we are trying to make trading an honourable calling."

When the Crown Prince of Japan visited England it was an unprecedented event in the history of that country, as formerly no representative of the reigning House had been allowed to leave his native land. We were invited to a dinner to meet him, and heard him make a speech in Japanese. To English ears his elocution was peculiar, as he pronounced his words with a little pause between each, and the effect, to those who did not understand what he was saying, was much like the short, sharp barks of a dog; but it was singularly efficient, in that everything which he uttered rang with clearness to the remote confines of the room, whereas the speeches by Englishmen, with their words strung swiftly together, were inaudible save to those in the immediate vicinity of the speaker.

To the Japanese, loyalty is a religion. For centuries the Shoguns governed Japan while the Emperor remained in comparative obscurity, fulfilling the rôle of a divine figurehead. In him was centred all the high ideals, all the patriotism of the nation; yet he was a religious, not a political, force; and the Shoguns were the Rulers of the country. Even in these more democratic days, the Emperor is regarded with a profound reverence. When a Japanese went to see our King open Parliament, my husband asked him what had struck him most about the procession. "*The noise*," was his reply; the cheering crowd had astonished him, for the Japanese greet their Sovereign with silent veneration.

It is difficult for English people to understand to what extent our Gilbert and Sullivan opera, the *Mikado*, grates upon the feelings of all loyal Japanese. Although they never call their Emperor by that name, and although the comic buffoon in the play was never remotely intended by the English author for any representation of their Emperor, the suggestion involved in the title is inexpressibly painful to them, and the play might so easily be given another name which would fit it equally well and wound the susceptibilities of no one. "Would you like your Christ to be ridiculed as the comic character in a play in Tokio?" a Japanese once asked me; "to us it is the same."

My first experience of Japanese fare was at the house of Mr. Tokugawa. His father, Prince Tokugawa, is President of the House of Peers in Japan, and his grandfather was the last of the Shoguns

—for three centuries his ancestors ruled Japan till the Tokugawa dynasty was overthrown by a revolution. His wife is aunt to the Crown Princess, and a sister of Prince Shimidzu, who was erroneously reported to have been killed in the recent earthquake.

Mr. Tokugawa had kindly warned us to have some English food before we came, in case we did not like the fare he put before us; but in my ignorance I disregarded this suggestion. It was the day of the King's garden party at Windsor, and although we arrived punctually, some of the guests did not appear till nine o'clock, and as I had had nothing to eat since one o'clock I was faint with hunger.

"Is it the custom in Japan to arrive at the time you are invited?" my husband inquired by way of conversation; and Mr. Tokugawa replied gaily: "To arrive when you are asked—that is rude! You arrive punctually—your host is not ready; you arrive late, he is enchanted to see you!" It sounded very plausible.

When at last we ascended to the dining-room, I thought happily, "A little soup or a little wine will soon revive me;" and I looked with eager curiosity at the table. To English eyes, the absence of glass and silver made it look strangely bare, and I saw with regret that even the customary roll by the plate of each guest was missing. In the centre of the table were four chrysanthemums—yellow chrysanthemums are the emblem of Imperial power—and in front of each guest was a red tray with five or six mysterious bowls upon it which I eyed with misgiving; one I recognized as a bowl of soup, one contained lettuces, one slabs of something pallid which I could not define. On my right was Captain Jackson, then Secretary to Winston Churchill, but formerly Naval attaché at Tokio, and I appealed to him as a connoisseur; "What is that?" I asked indicating the dish which looked most substantial among the vegetarian fare. "Raw fish!" was the answer.

I turned to tackle my soup. It was the colour of pallid water, and I saw there were prawns floating in it among long shreds of green stuff—presumably vegetable. "If I can only get a prawn inside me I shall feel better," I thought, for the pangs of hunger were making me desperate. I looked at my hostess who, dressed in a lovely blue kimono embroidered in gold with a gold obi, was manipulating her chop-sticks with dainty grace, eating the prawns, winding the long strips of seaweed prettily round the sticks till, having disposed of all that was solid in the little bowl, she raised it to her lips and drank the rest.

I stripped the paper from my chopsticks and strove to follow her example. Holding them awkwardly I diligently chased a prawn round my bowl; but it eluded me. The thing seemed endowed with life; it slid, it shot, it slipped between the sticks, with hateful agility; nohow could I entrap it. At last, after interminable efforts, I succeeded in nipping it in uncertain hold,

and then cautiously I began to raise it to my lips in dire alarm lest it should slip once more.

And it *did*!

Ere I could deposit it safely between my lips I found that attached to it were long strips of the green vegetable—yards long, they seemed to me—and still clutching my captive anxiously, I wound and wound the stuff interminably round the sticks, each moment hoping to come to the end of it. But just as I was about to be successful, the prawn once more shot from my uncertain grip and floated triumphantly away, while I was left with a long shred of seaweed binding the chopsticks firmly together. After that I pleaded for a spoon; and amid much laughter the longed-for implement was provided, when I caught and devoured my prawns hurriedly to still that unassuaged, aching void within, further ending my fast with a banquet of lettuces.

Since then I have been to many Japanese dinners, and although I have not yet acquired a taste for raw fish, young bamboo or lotus roots, the food as a rule pleases one's artistic sense if not one's palate. Instead of our huge English joints and whole birds, it is like fairy food conceived by a poet and prepared by an artist. For instance, at one dinner we were given fish fashioned into squares like pretty sweetmeats and elaborately tied by ribbons of black and green seaweed; while, dining with the Marquis Nakanomikado I was much attracted by what I took to be some lovely chrysanthemums adorning one dish, but which, on inspection, proved to be carrots ingeniously fashioned into flowers. Yet such decorations are sometimes misleading. I was attacking another pretty blossom with ineffectual energy when I looked up to find my host watching me with a quizzical smile. "That is ornament!" he said at last, and I found that I had been hacking vainly at a tough cock's comb.

The Marquis Nakanomikado is one of the Grand Chamberlains at the Court of Japan, who as Master of the Ceremonies has the unique right to turn his back to the Emperor during the course of his official duties. He visited the different Courts of Europe to study the ceremonial and etiquette at each, and before going to our English Court his wife came, with four other Japanese ladies, who were to accompany her, to ask if I would tell them whether their curtsies were strictly in accordance with English custom. Afterwards someone described to me how at that Court a Japanese lady who came in with the *entrée* practised her curtsy prettily beforehand to the empty throne, and from the description I recognized the little Marchioness, who is singularly graceful in every movement. One of the richest heiresses in Japan, she dresses and dances beautifully, and while in England entertained constantly as a delightful hostess. I heard afterwards that when she left this country she took home English goods on a scale which amazed English shopkeepers. "I like that," she pronounced, when shown

a bale of dress material at Harrods. "How many yards will you require?" inquired the shopgirl. "I will take all!" each time was the surprising answer.

Another charming hostess was Madame Nagai, wife of the Counsellor of the Embassy. She had left two children in Japan, and two were subsequently born in England, where they were brought up by English nurses and later attended an English school. As a result, they could speak nothing but English, and on their return to their native country, they of course found that their little brother and sister there could speak nothing but Japanese. Suddenly an idea occurred to the two latter. Every Japanese child learns "God save the King," and they promptly struck up our National Anthem in which their anglicized brother and sister could join. All four sang it through solemnly, and thus a link was established between the East and West!

Another interesting friend was Viscount Ito, who told us how in Rome he had had an audience with the Pope, and the Pope put his arm round him and led him to where on the walls of the Vatican was depicted in fresco the scene when a direct ancestor of his, many centuries ago, had gone on a special mission to his Holiness. For about the year 1600 fifty Feudal Lords of Japan had been converted to Christianity by the Jesuits; they had turned their arms against the reigning Tokugawa Dynasty, striving to promote a revolution; and by and by, led by the Viscount's ancestor, they had braved the perils and fatigues of the then terrible journey to Rome in order to pay their homage to, and procure the blessing of, the great Head of Christendom.

II

Shortly before the war we were dining with the Japanese Military attaché, Colonel Higashi, when a curious incident took place. As we entered the room I was introduced to the German Military attaché, a gigantic, good-looking man: but my husband did not hear the introduction, and in the course of dinner the lady whom he had taken in and who was the wife of the General then commanding at Aldershot, asked him what he thought of the alleged German peril. My husband, who always mistrusted Germany, emphatically stated his conviction that that country was preparing a Navy solely to attack us and was only waiting for a plausible excuse to fly at our throats. He was proceeding to enlarge upon the topic, when I leaned across to him and said *sotto-voce*—"Be careful! the German Military attaché is present and is listening to every word you are saying!" My husband promptly changed the subject, and declared afterwards that he had rapidly unsaid all his previous remarks.

In the drawing-room, after dinner, Col. Higashi showed us a picture of Marshal Yamagata, head of the Japanese army, seated

in a circle surrounded by the General Staff. "We cannot understand," Col. Higashi remarked, "why Yamagata is at the head of the army, because he never did much, or wrote much on military science; yet there he is, and we are all content! But he is a silent man, and no one understands how he got there!"

Suddenly the German attaché, who had not taken part in the conversation, stepped forward. "Ah, I understand!" he said; "all your great men are silent. Yamagata is silent, Kitchener is silent, Togo is silent; and I also," tapping his chest as he looked pointedly at my husband, "I also, will be silent!"

There were similar episodes before the great War to which at the time one attached but little significance. Lichnowsky, for instance, was staying at Holkham and they noticed that he was always eager to read all the Radical newspapers and those of a democratic tendency, whereas papers like the *Morning Post* or *Times* had little interest for him. Was he trying to find grounds for the belief that the disaffection in England and Ireland was like tinder waiting the application of a match to burst into flame? One day, expressing his admiration for the house and its treasures he said: "I shall never rest till I have brought the Kaiser to see all this!"

The war is still too recent and the horror of it too present for us to talk readily of its lighter side; nevertheless that lighter side was one to which we all clung with a desperation bred of the knowledge that so only could we retain our sanity, our faith in the ultimate issue. And the "Tommies" understood this, the brave lads who marched into the jaws of Hell, singing their ridiculous ditties, or who crawled stolidly back, maimed and blind, to endure a lifelong martyrdom. Inbred in each Englishman, high and low, is an ineradicable reticence respecting his own achievements; these men never voluntarily spoke of what they had done in the days of their Calvary. They just wanted to forget, for a space; to know that somewhere in God's world there was still sunshine and the laughter for which they hungered.

One day I was asked to take out driving a wreck of humanity whom many could not bear to look upon. His tongue had been slit, his nose and part of his face were gone, his mouth was—as the nurse described it—an artificial apparatus. He could eat nothing solid: He could not frame words intelligibly. I took him into the country, where the sunlight lay upon the peaceful English landscape, where all seemed fair and glad; but he was very ill and, afraid that he could not endure the fatigue, I asked him if he would like to return. He held up his hands in piteous protest, and from his awful mouth came the words which I could just distinguish: "*I am in Heaven!*"

Once a man told me a story—a common enough story, no doubt—and it was more about another than himself. He was just

a little village postman before the war, with no thought beyond his daily round, his small garden, his church on Sunday, when the cataclysm came which invaded his quiet backwater of existence, and swept him out to France.

There a shell shattered his thigh, and in agony he crawled into a ditch to die. And in the ditch with him was another stricken man, the son of a millionaire, a man whose name was familiar to me, as I had danced with him at balls. For a couple of days and a night the two lay awaiting death in terrible suffering ; then a rescue party came and was proceeding to remove the officer when he refused. " The other fellow is in a worse plight—take him first," he ordered. So they carried off the postman in spite of his protests, but by and by the Germans attacked the rescue party, and he fell into their hands. " I've nothing against them Germans ! " he said to me earnestly. " They treated me just as if I was one of their own wounded. They took me to a farm-house from which the French had fled and they gave me some wine the people had left. They had no food for themselves, but that drink saved me. Then after a day up came the English and started bombing the farm, and nearly killed me with the rest, till they found out who I was, and then I got shipped back home. But the other fellow "—there was a catch in his voice—" the only son of a rich man, with everything to live for, they forgot him—or else they couldn't get back—and when he was found he was dead . . . dead of starvation like a dog in that ditch ; and he died for me ! "

At home the sudden obliteration of all petty social landmarks was complete. " Only think," a girl said to me the first year of the war, " if anyone had told us that we should be having tea at Hurlingham this season with a dustman, a butcher and a blacksmith, in their dressing-gowns ! " and the companionship of our new friends was illuminating. The blacksmith, I found, was an enthusiast in archæology ; the butcher, a delicate, refined-looking lad, read poetry and raved about flowers ; and the dustman was one of the most agreeable conversationalists I have met—his profession, so he informed me, led to his seeing a good bit of life !

The ingenuity of the Cockneys " somewhere in France " when dealing with the intricacies of a language of which they had gleaned but a few words gave rise to many good tales. One day a Cockney seeing a Gallic cow straying, which he knew to be the property of a French *fermière* from whom his regiment was wont to purchase milk and eggs, hastened off to inform the owner. Not knowing what to call the animal in French, he announced ingeniously : " Madame, doo lay promenade ! "

Another Cockney at an entertainment was served with a plate of ham so *passé* as to be uneatable. He was at a loss how to explain what was the matter to the waitress, when a friend said : " 'Ere, I know French. I'll tell 'er ! " Then to the waitress, " Mamselle,"

and, pointing to the plate, said with much emphasis: "*Je suis! 'Igh 'am!* (I am)."

Yet another soldier, an officer's batman, used to be told the French for things he was sent out to buy—"*œufs*" for eggs, etc., etc.

One day he came proudly back with a fowl. "How on earth did you get that?" said his master. "You don't know the French for it, do you?" "No, sir, but I went to the old Frenchwoman, and she says: 'Voulez-vous des œufs?' So I says: 'Nong, je voulais le *mamma* of these œufs!'"

Some of our Colonials had the reputation of having but little respect for the laws of *meum* and *tuum*. When General Allenby was advancing through Palestine, it was reported that the Australians had reached Bethlehem. "I sy," remarked an astute Cockney on hearing this, "Bet cher the shepherds watched their flocks *that* night!"

Once the King and Queen did a tour in the North-eastern Counties, visiting hospitals, munition works, etc. There were many more hospitals than the Queen could possibly visit, so with her natural thoughtfulness H.M. sent to every one where she was unable to go personally a bouquet, in order that they might not feel overlooked and forgotten. These bouquets were, needless to say, enormously appreciated and treasured by the soldiers.

At one of these hospitals they heard that H.M. was going to drive past on one of her expeditions, so every patient who could leave his bed crawled out to the roadside and lined up to give her a hearty cheer as she drove by.

At the last moment it occurred to one of the men to fetch out the Queen's bouquet to show her how much it was appreciated. He dashed back into the hospital, snatched the bouquet from its vase, and ran with it, all dripping, just as H.M.'s carriage drove up; when he elbowed his way successfully to the front rank wildly brandishing the flowers to attract the Queen's attention. She naturally thought the poor fellow was trying to present her with a bouquet, so, as the carriage drove slowly past, she stretched out a beautifully gloved hand, took the dripping nosegay, bowed and smiled her thanks—and drove on with it!

Consternation reigned amongst the soldiers as they realized the disaster which had happened—their much-prized bouquet had been carried off! At last one, uttering the general sentiment, gasped out in horror-stricken accents: "By Gawd, she's pinched it!"

The Queen's equerry riding after her carriage, luckily heard this, roared with laughter, and afterwards reported the incident. And next day that hospital received another bouquet from the Queen.

The air-raids over London are still fresh in the memory of all, but they affected people differently—some of the bravest suffered

most, some of the usually nervous were little perturbed. Individually they produced in me no sense of fear, only a curious sensation of detachment—I felt I was looking on at something unreal—which at least had no personal significance. "Do you know the feeling one has when one is reading a book of hair-breadth escapes," I asked an officer once—"how one knows that, whatever happens, the hero or heroine is bound to come out of it alive, because otherwise the story would end? I have the same sensation in regard to air-raids—that nothing can happen to me individually, *because otherwise the story would end!*"

"One has the same feeling on a battlefield," he replied; "the conviction that there is danger for every one else—death, one knows, is striking all round one, but it cannot touch one's self. Otherwise . . ."

"Otherwise?"

"One would go mad," he said simply.

Once having been bombed in London *ad nauseam*, I went to stay in East Yorkshire, and was just reflecting with a sigh of relief how delightful it would be to go to bed without the usual uproar when, at 10 p.m., the door opened and an agitated servant announced: "News has come through that the Zeppelins are advancing on Hull!" In a moment shutters were shut and lights extinguished, and my host had rushed off to the village to ensure that it was plunged into darkness, for it was well known that in the solitude of the country, where a stray light appeared, there a bomb was likely to descend. By and by I heard a voice beneath my window shouting to me that a chink of light was visible from my room, so I crawled into bed with shutters tightly closed and curtains drawn, and fell into a troubled sleep. About 3 a.m. I awoke, stifling for lack of air. "The raid was, of course, over hours ago," I reflected, judging by my London experiences; so I rose, and, turning on the lights full, thankfully flung the window wide open and sat beside it enjoying the breeze. By and by at breakfast the other occupants of the house regaled me with vivid accounts of the raid, which they had sat up to watch from the distance. "When was it over?" I asked. "The worst time was about 3 a.m." was the reply; "they seemed heading straight in our direction then!"

Yorkshire, however, characteristically evolved its own method of dealing with the unreasonable disturbance. During the early part of the war bombs were dropped on the little market town of Driffield, fortunately without doing any serious damage. Thereafter the following story spread all about that district, and was firmly believed by the country-folk. Some two miles to the east of Driffield there is a very small and insignificant village called Napperton, and it is said that a Napperton man was going home when the Zepp came over, flying very low, and he heard a voice say: "This is Napperton. We'll drop a bomb here!" On which, with great

presence of mind, he promptly yelled out: "Naw! Napperton be two mile furder on!"

So Napperton was spared and Driffield got the bombs instead! And incidentally, no doubt, the ingenious hero of the tale was well rewarded by many a free pint from his grateful neighbours.

Continually the ludicrous chased the tragic. One week the raiders came nightly over London, and they always arrived at dinner-time. Our house afforded no protection, so my husband made arrangements to take shelter in a tall, empty dwelling in the neighbourhood. On the first occasion when we availed ourselves of this plan, there was not even time to snatch a piece of bread before we had to fly for cover. All through an interminable evening we sat in a dreary basement with our servants and other refugees, while the caretaker's children screamed in the semi-darkness, and I thought longingly of the comfortable home and good dinner we had left. At last, at ten o'clock, it was all over, and we hastened back, starving, to find the fire still burning cheerily, the lights all turned on for safety—everything inexpressibly cosy, but the dinner on which I had counted was gone . . . a mauled chicken lay on the floor, a smashed sweet was tumbled on to the hearth-rug, the fish had vanished bodily . . . the cat had had the time of its life! And Jane (pretty Jane, still, though her locks are whitening), looking at the refuse of the meal, and combining cause and effect, murmured tragically: "Well, I'm sure I don't know what's to be done with all this refuge!"

(Indeed Jane aired her own views on prevailing conditions in typical fashion. The bombs of the enemy she invariably designated *booms*, and the word substituted seemed curiously soothing to jaded nerves. In regard to the German nation as a whole she remarked sadly how "the wicked always *do* flourish like a green baize tree!" And once when I questioned her about the amount of stuff requisite for a gown with inserted panels—all dress material having become unduly expensive—"It depends," she pronounced, "entirely on how you want it made—*whether you want a tableau before and a tableau behind!*" By and by, when we were staying in Hertfordshire, funds were being collected for a war memorial which it was suggested should take the form of providing a recreation ground for the parish; and one day Jane came to me triumphantly. "They have," she announced, "*collected enough for a Lynch Gate at the church, and the surplice is to be devoted to a procreation ground for the parish.*")

Once when there had been no raids for some weeks and the impression prevailed that means had been discovered to keep us immune from them, I went to a theatre. When I came out, before midnight, I found that the worst raid which had ever occurred had been going on for a couple of hours. No taxis were available, and when I had struggled to the tube it was packed with fugitives. All down the stairway people sat with books or knitting,

calmly settled there, if necessary, for the night; lower, along the platforms lay little children of various nationalities, asleep on shawls, while tired, tragic mothers brooded over them; the trains when they came in were one solid block of humanity. The atmosphere was nauseating, and I decided to walk home—an experience which proved worth the discomfort.

London was transformed—a place of mysterious beauty and silence, a city of the dead. Along Piccadilly tall buildings, silhouetted whitely in the dusky night, showed never a sign of habitation; the usually noisy thoroughfare was deserted; no vehicles passed, we met no pedestrians. Only over St. James's Park hung a moonlit mist, and above, in the silver sky, sparks like fire-flies flitted hither and thither—they looked like gay little insects pirouetting in the night, and it was difficult to understand that they represented Death and Life in mortal combat. . . . Then suddenly there recommenced the scream of the barrage, the thunder of the slaughtering bombs, and in the middle of the hideous noise I became aware that a magnificent limousine had drawn up silently by the curb.

"Which way are you going?" shouted the driver.

"Any way!" I called back, "if only I may get in and sit down, I am so tired!"

"I'll drive you where you want to go!" came the reply. I saw that the speaker was a girl who in other years would have been dancing at that hour. When I reached home I thanked her profusely.

"Oh, that's what I'm out for . . . to drive strays home!" she replied. "I'm on a holiday, back from France."

"Were you nursing out there?"

"I went to look after the dying," she said simply. "You see, the cases which can be patched up *have* to come first; others . . . the hopeless ones . . . sometimes have to be left. So I went out to *them*." . . . She was very pretty, a soft, kittenish little creature, who looked scarcely more than a child . . . and I thought of the sights she had seen. . . .

But the war developed latent characteristics previously unexpected.

Amongst its tragic toll were Claude Askew, a cousin of my husband, and his wife, who shared a curious and unique gift of authorship. Mrs. Askew was like a pretty piece of Dresden china, with large pathetic eyes; and her name always conjures up a vision of the last time I saw her seated by the fireside in her London flat, in a dainty dress of flowered muslin with a fichu of lace crossed over her breast and knotted like a sash at her waist. The atmosphere in the flat was that of a hot-house, and she herself lived the life of a hot-house plant. She never seemed to require exercise or fresh air, and she told me she never went out except in a closed brougham.

"We keep two secretaries," she said, "and they are busy most

of the day. I sit in an arm-chair with a cigarette and just reel off a story as it occurs to me, while a secretary takes it down. When I am tired, I stop, and Claude comes and takes up the plot where I left off!"

"But don't you find you have a lot of correction to do afterwards when you look over the typed sheets?" I asked.

"I hardly ever alter anything," she replied, "only a word here and there. I don't know what would happen if we were ill for one day, as we have four serials running now, and not one page ahead written! But the worst of writing nonsense of that description for the Daily Press is that the editor will suddenly write to you and say: 'We wish you to conclude your story in ten days' time.' And when you have had a perfect holocaust and killed off all the characters in order to be able to wind it up, he will write again and say: 'We find it will fit in with our arrangements for you to carry on for another fortnight!'" None the less, even when writing trash, the Askews had a wonderful gift of language and power of vivid, poetical description.

It seems impossible to picture that dainty, fragile-looking woman who sat so peacefully puffing rings of smoke into the hot air and drawing lightly upon the limitless wells of her imagination, suddenly swept out into the void, into the shattering roar of the guns, the sickening sights of blood and carnage; still more to think of her enduring the hardships of the Serbian retreat, and facing the tragic end when she and her husband met death at the hands of the Germans. Before going on that last voyage in a vessel which was submarined, she was obsessed by a foreboding that she would be drowned. "I must try to get home," she said despondently to a friend, "that is inevitable. But Kismet. This time I shall not come through alive!"

There were many harrowing versions of her death-story, one of the saddest being that she tried to save a little dog which she loved, and that as she was drowning, the Germans snatched it from her and killed it, while they mocked at her distress.

And again, though far from the danger-zone, the war took two who were dear to me.

In the spring of 1914, De Morgan and his wife left Venice for England, and on their way to the station in a gondola a snapshot was taken of them, which recently was enlarged and sent to me by Mr. Charles Davis. Evelyn is clasping a large bouquet of roses which had been given to her, and both look placid and happy, little aware that they are leaving Italy for the last time, or of the nightmare of distress and death which lay before them. (*See* page 376.)

Nearly three years later, one evening, standing on the darkened Embankment looking out over the water on which the searchlights were playing, De Morgan turned to my husband. "I just want," he said, "to live to see the last fight between our aircraft and the

enemy, and to see the last Zeppelin drop a fiery, flaming mass into the Thames!" But this was not granted him, and in regard to the tragedy which ensued, an epitaph in one of the old city churches might fittingly be quoted:

> He first deceased; she for a little tried
> To live without him; liked it not; and died.

By and by, when I published the Life of the two, as a result of the interest with which they were regarded, I received on an average between twenty and thirty letters per day about my book, from all parts of the world, and of these it may not be amiss to quote the following in view of the personality of the writers as well as of those they discussed. The first is from a late distinguished Ambassador to Washington; the second from the daughter of Mr. Gladstone.

Sir H. Mortimer Durand to Mrs. Stirling.

PLYMOUTH,
July 6, 1922.

DEAR MRS. STIRLING,—

I feel that I must presume on our slight acquaintance to write and thank you for the great pleasure I have had in reading your book, *William De Morgan and his Wife*. It is years since I have had the luck to read one that I found so completely absorbing.

You had a fine subject, but not an easy one, and it seems to me that you have carried out the work with extraordinary skill and success.

I did not know De Morgan—never met him except at a dinner of the Authors' Society to which you refer, but your book makes me feel as if I had known him well—and her too. How I wish I had.

One result of reading it has been to send me back to *Joseph Vance* and *Alice for Short* and the rest. That, no doubt, will be the result with many people.

I won't bother you with any more, but I congratulate you most heartily.

It's a book that will live.

Mrs. Drew to Mrs. Stirling.

DEAR MRS. STIRLING,—

Having only to-day laid down your wonderful book, I must send you one line of heartfelt thanksgiving.

No review that I have read has done the book real justice; the amount of material must have been maddening—what to choose, and the real agony of leaving out!

I can only say it makes me hungry for more. I would have liked it to be infinitely long and to have come out month

by month, because each number would have only made one mad for more. I would have liked twelve nice handy volumes, and more if there was more to say.

I love everything about his novels. Till then, the tragedy is almost unbearable, that two such people should have had the worry of L.s.d. A whole city of his houses should have been built, and the loveliest of them inhabited by the Two.

I mustn't write more—it makes me think better of humanity that so many thousands at once love his Joe.

I envy you having given such a treasure to mankind.

Yet another letter was written by one who shared the childhood of Sir Philip Burne-Jones and his sister, and who, reading my book, drifted back in thought to the days of long ago:

"It is not like reading a book—to me at least. It's a restoration for the time being of a beautiful, wonderful thing—of the whole of that glorious time of Burne-Jones, De Morgan, Morris—the life into which I was born, and accepted as a matter of course, as much as I did my dinner, until I was quite a grown woman and began to realize that although it was still a matter of course, in one sense, it was for all that a very wonderful matter.

"My more youthful views I found quite nicely expressed in a letter to a much-loved auntie, when I was fourteen, which she had kept. I was staying at the Grange:—

"'*Mr. Dick*[1] *came yesterday, and we had a glorious time. Phil and Margaret and I tied the dinner-bell round his neck, and chased him to the top of the house with hearth-brushes.*'

"Our young raptures took a different form where the 'Meorgans' were concerned, for we had sufficient decency to know he was not strong and certainly had sufficient sense of humour and character to feel completely happy merely to be in their company, listening to and sharing in their delicious fun. And oh, all the colour and the fun come back to life as I read your book. . . ."

So it is that, as the years pass, we deem that laughter is an eternal complement of youth. But with the De Morgans the laughter never died. The storms of life passed over them, they faced poverty, they faced apparent failure, their lives were full of wearing work, of tormenting anxiety, yet still the laughter lingered, and through the silence which has fallen it seems to linger still.

Recently in a notebook I found a brief pencilled sentence which my brother-in-law had doubtless intended to put into the mouth

[1] The Hon. R. C. Grosvenor, who formed one of the party on board the *Ark* during the memorable journey of William Morris and his friends from Hammersmith to Gloucestershire by river in 1881.

of one of his fictitious characters. "*I have no quarrel with my father,*" it ran, "*save for his share in my causation. Why could he not have left me alone—a harmless unit of non-entity?*" Many of us are tempted to view in similar fashion the existence which has been thrust upon us unsolicited, with its strange medley of joys and woes —its all-pervading sense of mystery in which we alternately magnify or minimize our own importance; and perhaps we all start life from the same standpoint. We deem that we shall commune with the angels, shall soar among the stars, till, as the years drift past, we are bruised by the rough-and-tumble of being, stung by a thousand contemptible pin-pricks. And by and by we learn that in the world around us, those who laugh gaily are not the happiest—but the bravest, and that the most heroic philosophy of life from cradle to grave is—in homely parlance—to make the best of a bad job.

So rings the message of Life to *nous autres*, the great mediocrity who strive and attain not; so it rang once for those to whom the chill hands of Death ironically brought plaudits and laurels. To-day one recalls the *obiter dicta* of those Two—the Potter and the Painter —in regard to their work. "Only my own extinction will make it valuable," De Morgan said of his pottery; and now eager collectors give pounds for the beauty for which once they would not have given the corresponding number of pence; while upon the pictures which Evelyn painted with unfailing courage but a tragic knowledge of the public lack of appreciation, the critic has pronounced his verdict:

"Of Mrs. De Morgan's paintings it may be said that their loveliness lay neglected because the artist worked so modestly, and without any twitching of the public sleeve. As an exquisite expression of the later Pre-Raphaelite movement they have an abiding value."

Vox populi! Vox Dei!

III

While the war still pursued its course, amid the prevailing gloom and horror, the heart-broken clutched despairingly at any sorry consolation, and superstition again reared its head. One story was said to be general knowledge among the senior submarine officers, and was told to me as follows by an officer in command of the Mediterranean flotilla.

"Among the captains of submarines operating about the south-east coast of England was an officer whom we will call Ryan. He was a man of striking appearance and charming personality, a great favourite in the depot ship mess, the sort of fellow who made everybody cheer up when he came among them.

"It was the custom of these vessels to leave for a from two to three weeks' observation patrol, usually off the Dutch shoals and mouth of the Jade river-way. They worked on the surface at night,

THE DE MORGANS LEAVING ITALY FOR THE LAST TIME, IN 1914.

From a snapshot taken by Mr. Charles H. Davies, of New York.

but by day, owing to the numerous German aircraft patrols, they only came to the surface as far as their periscopes till they had had a good look round and made sure the enemy aircraft had not started bombing. Ryan's ship left on one of these jobs and never returned, so it was taken for granted that she had met with bad luck and joined the great majority.

"Some seven or eight weeks later another boat was operating in a similar manner on approximately the same beat that Ryan's had been told off for. She was proceeding at slow speed and had just broken surface with the periscope, the Second in Command observing through it at the time. It must be repeated that even to come up as far as this was a dangerous proceeding, and had too often proved fatal. The day was brilliant and sunny, and the officer turned his periscope, searching cautiously over sky and ocean. Then suddenly his voice rang out in indescribable excitement.

"'By Jove,' he shouted, 'there's jolly old Ryan waving to us like mad from the water!' His excitement quickly communicated itself to every one on board ship. He promptly blew the tanks to bring the submarine to the surface, the captain and all the rest agreeing that it was an occasion worth taking the risk for, and meanwhile some crowded up the conning tower, others rushed on deck with life-lines, others ran to prepare restoratives for Ryan below. Then followed consternation and amazement. As the submarine reached the surface not a trace of Ryan, or indeed of any human being, was to be seen; no boat, no wreckage was visible from which he could have appeared in mid-ocean. The day was cloudless, and they scanned the shining surface of the water in vain. No one could doubt that the officer who had been reconnoitring had indeed seen Ryan; not only did he remain positive about it, but Ryan's appearance was so distinctive it was not likely any other man would be mistaken for him; still more, no one had been thinking of or speaking about Ryan to account for any hallucination on the part of the Second in Command, who still swore that he had seen him in bright daylight, gesticulating to them frantically.

"They moved slowly on, perplexed what to make of the occurrence, and still vainly scrutinizing their surroundings. Then, by and by, they did discern some object ahead of them in the direct course they were steering. It was motionless. They made their way cautiously up to it, and it resolved itself into two mines, which, *but for that vision of Ryan gesticulating to them, they would inevitably have struck!*"

Another tale anent mines hails from Erin, and out-Herods all British yarns.

A certain Englishman invariably went over to the West of Ireland every winter for wild-fowl shooting, and always took with him as gillie, an old Irishman. One winter during the war, he went there as usual, and, sending for the old Paddy, inquired if he would

come out with him as before. "Indade, yer Honour," was the reply, "I'm sorry, but I cannot."

"Why not?" inquired the Englishman.

"Well, yer Honour, I've got a moighty good job on, an' I'm arning good money, and I don't want to lose it."

"Well, then, can your brother come out with me?"

"Indade, yer Honour, but he can *not*!"

"How's that?"

"Well, yer Honour, he's arning good money too, and he don't want to lose his job."

The Englishman, knowing both brothers to be incorrigible loafers who hated work of any sort, was surprised, and asked: "What are these wonderful 'jobs' you don't want to lose?"

Whereupon the old fellow, looking cautiously round, replied: "Well, yer Honour, it's the truth I'll be telling ye! I'm gitting moighty good pay from the Jarmans for helping to lay down moines off the coast, and me brother he's getting well paid by the English Admiralty for fishing 'em up again!"

When the disloyalty to their Allies of the Russian Imperial family was a generally accepted myth in England, the majority of people were violent in their prejudice against the Czar, who was spoken of as a mere tool of a pro-German, mystical, and even immoral wife. The German propaganda to this effect, cunningly promulgated in this country in order to alienate the two nations, and fostered by sensational fiction, was impossible to combat. As I knew personal and lifelong friends of the Czarina, these libels against the character of a cruelly maligned woman did not deceive me; but at one time I found myself laughed to scorn if I championed her cause. Moreover the strong vein of fanaticism in her character was little comprehended by, and antagonistic to, the English temperament.

To these causes was attributable the callousness exhibited by both Press and public at first, in regard to a tragedy as dramatic as it was horrible. People who were thrilled over stories of the French Revolution, and who loved to dwell with morbid insistence on the minutest detail of the martyrdom of Marie Antoinette, were curiously indifferent to the parallel being enacted in our day; and in this, too, history was but repeating itself. I have seen contemporary letters, written by level-headed, highly educated English people during the progress of the French Revolution, in which Marie Antoinette is spoken of with unhesitating conviction as a woman of the lowest and most infamous character, guilty of abominable crimes. Time, which has cleared her effectually from the mud with which she was besmirched, has done that same kindly office for the memory of the unfortunate Czarina and her husband

who literally laid down their lives in loyalty to the Allies who distrusted them.

The account of an audience which a friend of ours had with the Czar shortly before the outbreak of the revolution is singularly pathetic. Sent on a special mission to Russia, this man, I believe, was the last Englishman who had an interview with the ill-fated monarch, whom he found full of happy confidence respecting the future trend of events. "Tell King George," said the Czar when he took his leave, "that he has no more loyal ally than myself—we sink or swim together; but, personally," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "*I* mean to swim!"

The history of the repulsive, mysterious figure of Rasputin acquires new horror from the following first-hand account of his death which I received in a letter recently, from an English officer.

"I have been staying in Paris with some of the fugitive Russian nobility, among others the aunt of Prince Youssoupoff, who murdered Rasputin. . . . Many Russians are against him, as he offended against the Russian code of hospitality, but the story of what took place is weird.

"The Prince invited Rasputin to his house; they gave him poisoned cakes to kill him; it had no effect! yet a scrap was thrown to a dog who died instantly. Rasputin then called for wine, and they gave him poisoned wine, also without effect. The Prince then dragged him into the Chapel before the cross, which he invoked, and shot him several times in the head and chest. Rasputin lay to all appearances dead, and they left him.

"Rasputin was, however, feigning death, and when he thought he was unobserved, he tried to effect his escape; the Prince's companions spied him. They pursued him into the garden, where they riddled him with bullets, and then threw him into the Neva. But the miraculous thing was that they had been *unable to kill him with the poison or with the shots through the brain at close range!* This extraordinary fact baffles explanation, and the man undoubtedly had some abnormal powers."

The writer of the above was unaware of the sequel to which an eyewitness swore—that when Rasputin's body was subsequently taken out of the Neva, the features were found fixed into a sinister smile, while the arms, stiffly extended, were frozen rigid into the attitude of the cross which he had invoked, with the fingers raised as though in the act of benediction!

One more gruesome story connected with the war is too strange to omit. It was told by the late Mr. C. Dundas, of India, a nephew of Lord Halifax, in the library at Hickleton, on Tuesday, September 21, 1920.

"I must first explain how I came to hear this story," he said. "You probably all know that last year we had a war with Afghanistan. That was put an immediate and sudden stop to by the fact

that we had a very big aeroplane called 'the old Carthusian,' out in India at the time, which was ordered to go and bomb Cabul. This was shortly after the murder of the late Ameer, and the present Ameer was supposed to have known something about the murder. The main object of bombing the city was to frighten the mother of the present Ameer, and that result was so very efficiently attained that, immediately after, a message came to the effect that they wanted peace.

"Between our outposts and Cabul there is a mountain some 6,000 feet high (more than 2,000 feet higher than Ben Nevis), and the men who carried the aeroplane had the greatest difficulty in returning. They only cleared the top of the mountain by ten feet, and they crashed on their way back, damaging themselves. The steerer was a little man, about 4 ft. 5 in. in height, Hallé, a well-known flying man, and with him was a man named Villiers, a flying man of France, who had retired from the Air Force when war broke out in Afghanistan.

"The other day I was coming home to England, and Villiers was a passenger on board the P. & O. boat on which I was sailing. I did not know beforehand that he was a flying man, but I joined a group consisting of him and two senior colonels of the Indian Army acting as brigadiers in Mesopotamia. About 12 p.m. we were in the Red Sea. The conversation turned on Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, and especially on the behaviour of the Australian troops, and I heard the general opinion expressed that the Australians, though brave, were lawless, and that no successful efforts were made to keep them in order. For instance, one of the Portsmouth harbour police was murdered in cold blood by one of the Australians before they joined their ship.

"Villiers thereupon said he could tell us a curious story of the Australian Flying Corps, and at that suggestion, the weather being hot, I proposed that he should first fortify himself with a whisky-and-soda; but he refused, saying: 'If I take it you will certainly not believe the story I am thinking of telling you!' He then related the following experience.

"He had been quartered in France at one of the flying camps, next door to a flying squadron which was manned by Australians. As I think most people are aware, the greater number of the pilots in France were young men of from nineteen to twenty-four years of age, or even less. The Australian Flying Corps were especially daring, but when off duty the pilots and observers were extremely wild, and it must be confessed that they spent their time gambling, drinking, or any form of dissipation they could find, on the principle of eating and drinking to-day for to-morrow we die.

"One night a game of poker was going on among four young pilots belonging to the same flight who were all due to go out the next morning. They were all much in debt, and the game

was carried on largely on credit. The youngest pilot was a heavy loser, and at the end of each game gave IOUs for his losses, saying 'I cannot possibly pay you to-night, but I will pay you all to-morrow.'

"The next morning the weather was fair for flying, and the youngest pilot was due to go up first, which he accordingly did. His machine had hardly got to a height of 300 feet, when it suddenly spun into a dive in a manner which it could hardly have done unless it had been forced into it by the pilot—at least, it was not the natural way a plane would have fallen if it had been left without control. The plane crashed and the pilot was killed on the spot. He was the young man who had said he would pay all the others on the next day.

"The next man to go up was another of the four players. He reached a height of about 500 feet. He was flying a double machine with a seat for an observer, and with a double control, but the observer's seat was empty. When at a height of nearly 500 feet his machine suddenly pulled out of the ascent and crashed. He was not killed on the spot, although he died afterwards, and when he was asked how on earth he had come to crash as he did, he replied that the pilot, whom he named (the youth who had previously been killed), was sitting behind him in the observer's seat and had jammed the control and pulled him down!

"The next man to go up was the third of the poker party of the night before. He went up alone, and got to about the same elevation when the same accident occurred to him, but as he was killed on the spot, it is unknown how he came to his end.

"By this time, to use a common expression, 'the wind was getting up' among the pilots of the squadron. Two men had already been mysteriously killed and one mortally injured, and the fourth man of the poker party went to the Flying Commander and asked to be excused from taking a machine up that morning. His request was refused, on the ground that someone had to go up, and each must take his turn.

"The result was fatal to the pilot. He took up his machine, and at about the same height for some reason it was pulled down out of its flight and crashed as the others had done. He was alive when picked up, and said, as the only explanation he could give of his fall, that the young pilot was sitting behind him and had pulled the controls away from him!

"This was told as a true story by a well-known pilot of the Air Force at 12.30 in the day to a number of senior officers in the smoking-room of a P. & O. steamer, the man telling the story having assisted in doing the most material service to the Empire in the extremely risky attack on Cabul in 1919."

Now, why a phantasm of the pilot should occasion the death of three harmless comrades, why the apparition of Ryan diverted

one ship from destruction while hundreds were left to perish, I do not pretend to explain. The angelic host at Mons, the mighty Russian army which numberless people professed to have witnessed marching through England, have resolved themselves into the exploded myths of a fevered imagination. To-day the war itself, with its inefficient angels and its very potent devils, its tears of blood and its mirage of glory, is itself like a dream which passed in the night but has left us numb with the horror of its passing, befouled as by a breath from hell. . . .

And to-day we have awakened to find an earth, new and transformed indeed, where the guns are hushed and the sounds of merriment are resumed throughout the land, where the stricken have crawled away into hiding and the broken-hearted lift a brave front to the sun. Yet through Purgatory we had hoped to win to Paradise, and the chords of life still jangle discordantly with a prolonged lack of harmony. And meanwhile the man who turned our civilization into that nightmare of horror is living a placid old age in a place which our troops appropriately term "Am-a-wrong-'un," and the fitting epitome of his career was thus pronounced by the witty French ambassadress:

"Le Kaiser a commencé par être Napoléon; il a fini par Monkey gland et les cheveux marcel!"

* * * * *

But by now, even with my tale half told, I have long since reached and passed the one hundred thousand words respecting which the modern publisher has pronounced his fiat, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further." And another danger threatens. My critics, I am informed, have invariably been kind to me, and I think we understand each other—I know they have not read my books, and I never read their reviews. Yet I cannot help recalling a story which Mr. Alfred Austin used to tell. He was in the office of an editor one day when a very young reviewer brought in a book which he had been given to criticize. Now, neither the reviewer nor the editor had read a page of that work, and the former conscientiously desired to know what lines the latter wished him to go upon.

"What am I to do with this?" he asked.

The editor just glanced at the cover and observed brightly: "Give it hell!"

So perhaps if I do not wish to share this fate, I had better cease. At some future date, if the public so wills, I may add to these some recollections for which the time is not yet ripe. Meanwhile I cling to the belief that, in the words of Mr. G. K. Chesterton:

> There is good news yet to hear and fine things to be seen,
> Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.

Index

A——, Lieut., 137
Addison, Mrs. Joseph, 133, 136, 137
Adeane, Lady Edith, 159
Albert, Prince, 197
Alexandra, Queen, 38–9, 44, 45, 47, 48, 202, 203, 270
Alix, Princess of Hesse, 39
Allen, Mr., 235
Allingham, W., 228, 230
Alnwick Castle, 129
Althorp, Lord, 234
Amélie, Queen of France, 289
Amor, Albert, 288
Anderson, Mary, 117
Angoulême, Duke and Duchess of, 289
Animal suicide, 333
Anson, Lady, 62
Apparitions, Stories of, 226, 285, 308, 310, 312, 313 *et seq.*, 322 (*see also* under " Ghosts ")
Argyll, Duke of, 324
Argyll and the Isles, Bishop of, 324
Armstrong, Lord, 125
Ashley, Mrs., 275–6
Askew, Mr. and Mrs., 372–3
Austin, Alfred, 382
Austin (Butler), 171

Balfour, Lord, 149
Banks (Yorkshire), 73 *et seq.*, 112
Barrett, Sir William, 234, 235, 236
Bateman, 21
Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, 262
Bedford, Duke of, 238
Bedingfeld, Sir Henry and Lady, 271, 272
Behrens, Mrs., 57
Belvedere, Lady, 286
Beresford, Lord Marcus, 202
Bernhardt, Sarah, 182, 183
Berry, Miss Mary, 290
Besant, Mrs., 193
Bess of Hardwick, 271
Bicton Hall, 130
Birch, Mrs. de Hoghton, 217
" Bisley Boy," Legend of, 275, 276
Blavatsky, Madame, 193
Blessington, Lady, 134
Blicking, 272–3
Bodley, G. F., 212–13
Boleyn Anne, 272–5
Bonaparte, Jerome, 260
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 241, 260, 282
Boswell, 207, 294
Boucicault, Nina, 187
Bovill, Chief Justice, 66
Bower, Mrs., 140
Bowles, T. Gibson, 342–3
Bradshaw, Miss, 59
Bramwell, Sir F., 348–9
Broadley, A. M., 346
Broughton, Rhoda, 149
Brown, Ford Madox, 217
Brown, John, 198
Brown, Mrs. (Queen's Milliner), 17
Browning, Pen, 159–60
Browning, Mr. and Mrs. R., 159–61
Bull, Dr., 349
Bulwer, Mr. (of Heydon), 261
Burne-Jones, 211 *et seq.*, 228–9
Burne-Jones, Philip, 212, 375
Burrell family, 131–3

Cairns, Lord, 58
Campbell, Lady Elspeth, 354
Cannon Hall, 75, 94, 100, 112, 277
Carlyle, Mr. and Mrs., 198, 230
Cascine at Florence, 153
Cat with Mummy Cat, 294
Cat, " The Queen," 294
Cat, " The Vampire," 293–4
Caton, R., and Misses, 259–60
Cavendish, Hon. Georgiana, 264
Cavendish, Hon. Susan, 62–3
Cecil, Lady Sophia, 243
Channon, 88
Charlotte, Queen, 84–5
Charnwood, Lord, 297
" Chesney Wold," Original of, 323
Chesterton, G. K., 346–7, 382
" Clair-audience," Stories of, 313
Clarence, Duke of, 107
Clarke Mrs., 113 *et seq.*
Cleveland, Duchess of, 61
Clint (Artist), 138
Coates Castle, 133
Cobden-Sanderson, Mr., 341–2
Coke, Lady Anne, 256, 261
Coke, Hon. Edward, 48
Coke, Hon. Mrs. Edward (Di), 48

Coke, Hon. Henry, 263, 266, 267
Coke, Lady Mabel, 254
Coke, Lady Mary, 256, 290
"Coke of Norfolk," 238, 256, 258–9, 261
"Coke of Norfolk," Biography of, 256–7
"Coke of Norfolk" (son of), 262 *et seq.*
Coke family, Ramifications of, 265
Coleridge, Sir John, 66
Coleridge, S. J., 162
Congleton, Dowager Lady, 58
Cook, Warde, 256
Cooke (of Wheatley) family, 129
Coroneo, Madame, 117
Costessy House, 322–3
Cotes, Misses, 130
Cra'ster, John, 125
Cra'ster Tower, 125
Cra'ster Village, 127
Creed, Mrs., 283, 284, 285
"Creeds of the Day," 266
Creighton, Bishop, 127
Crichton, Mrs., 177
Crookes, Sir W., 193
Cross, Mr., 226–7
Currie, Edward R., 353
Czar and Czarina of Russia, 378 *et seq.*

"Daniel Deronda," De Morgan family in, 225–6
Darwin, Charles, 244, 246
Dawson-Damer, Mrs., 290
Davy, Sir Horace, 354
"Death-Watch, The," 32–3
De Morgan, Augustus, 229
De Morgan, Evelyn, 13, 23, 38, 50, 104, 116–17, 120, 144, 154, 209 *et seq.* 210–11, 224, 225, 232–3, 337, 373–4
De Morgan, Mary, 117, 225
De Morgan, Mrs. Sophia, 225, 230
De Morgan, William, 207, 209 *et seq.*, 212, 223 *et seq.*, 226, 227–8, 233, 267, 334 *et seq.*, 373–4
Devonshire, Duchess of, 85
Dickens, Charles, 198
Disraeli, Mr., 199
Disraeli, Mrs., 69, 70
"Drawing-rooms," Victorian, 163–4
Drayton House, 281 *et seq.*
Dress, Women's, 185
Drew, Mrs., 274–5
Drummond, General Sir Hugh, 354–5
Dryden, 285
Dumas *fils*, 183
Dundas, Sir David, 348
Dundas, Mrs., 69
Dupplin, Lord, 325
Durand, Sir Mortimer, 374
Dutton, Jane, 256, 264

Ecton Hall, 63, 121, 123–4
Edward VII, 201 *et seq.*, 265, 270
Edwards, Mr. and Mrs., 31, 32, 33
Egremont, Lord, 133 *et seq.*
Eliot, George, 225–6, 232
Elizabeth, Queen, Legend concerning, 275–6
Elizabeth, Queen, Ballad on, 277
Ellice, Edward ("Bear"), 264
Elwes, 57
Emmanuel Almshouses, 227
Embledon, 126
Erskine, Mrs. Stewart, 58, 189
Esterhazy, Countess, 259–60
Evelyn, Mr., 312
Eyre, Miss, 260
Eyre, Lady Alice, 350

Fairlie-Cunninghame, Lady, 306
Falkland Isles, 246–7
Ferguson, Dr., 286
ffolkes, Sir W. and Lady, 269 *et seq.*
Fielding, Lady Adelaide, 64
Fitzherbert, Mrs., 136
Flying Corps, Australian, Story of, 380–1
Forbes-Robertson, Sir Johnstone, 178
Foster, Lady Betty, 85
Foster, Professor Carey, 229
Fox, Charles James, 288
Fox, Miss (*see* Lady Lilford)

Gabriel, Virginia, 326
Gardner, Captain Allen, 244, 246
Garland, Mrs., 136, 140
George III, 84
George IV, 85, 253
Germaine, Lady Betty, 282
German Reeds, 118
Ghosts, Stories of, 69, 81–2, 96–9, 127–8, 140, 151–2, 251–2, 253, 269–70, 272–3, 285, 307 *et seq.*, 373–4, 379–80 (*see also* under "Apparitions")
Gilbert, W. S., 182
Gilchrist, Ernest, 178
Gilibert, Madame de, 133–5, *et seq.*, 138, 140–1
Gilibert, Mildred de, 133, 155–8
Ginori, Marchese di, 153
Gladstone, W. E., 69
Glamis Castle, Mystery of, 152, 326 *et seq.*
Gosfield Hall, 289
Grain, Corney, 179–82

Grassina, Religious procession at, 158
Grecq, Madame, 193
Grey, Sir Edward, 126
Grey, of Howick, 128–9
Grey, Lady Maria, 130
Grimthorpe, Lord, 60, 71, 161
Grossmith, George, 179
Guise, Sir William, 306–7

Haggard, Colonel Andrew, 346
Haggard, Bassett, 346
Haggard, Sir Rider, 319, 346
Halifax, Lord, 48, 286, 292, 294
Hanbury, Lily, 177
Harberton, Lady, 188–9
Harcourt, Sir W., 178
Harcourt, Archbishop of York, 286–7
Harcourt, Lord, 286–7
Harmsworth, Alfred, 343
Harrowby, Mr. 129
Hartwell House, 288–9
Haverholme Priory, 323
Hawtrey, George, 186
Head, Dr., 226, 232
Helen, Princess of Montenegro, 153
Herford, Miss, 227–8
Herring, Mr., 261
Hervey, Rt. Rev. Lord Arthur, 248
Hickleton, 286, 379
Higaski, Colonel, 366–7
Hill, Octavia, 160
Hillington, 269 *et seq.*
Hobart, Lady, 159
Hogg, Lady Stuart, 311
Holiday, Henry, 213, 215, 231
Holkham, 253, 254, 255, 258, 259
Holland, Lord and Lady, 262–3
Hook, Dean, 353
Hooper, Mr., 137
Horniman, Roy, 186–7
Hoskin, Admiral, 241
Hotham, Lord, 180, 259, 351 *et seq.*, 357–8
Houghton, Lord, 61, 344–5
Hudson, Marianne, 102–3
Humbert, King, 152–3
Hunsdon House, 239
Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Holman, 218–19

Imperial, Prince, 286
Inge, Dean, 355
Inglefield, Lady, 329–30
Ionides, Miss, 117
Irving, Henry, 183, 184, 187
Isted, Ambrose, 63, 121
Isted, Barbara, 122
Isted, Mrs. Fanny, 62, 63, 64, 121, 122–3
Ito, Viscount, 366
Iyliff, Miss, 133

Jane, "Pretty," 20, 30–1, 54, 72, 254, 257, 261, 268, 285, 371
Japan, Crown Prince of, 363
Japanese, Stories and Customs of, 359 *et seq.*
Jerningham, Charles, 343 *et seq.*
Jerningham, Sir Henry, 322–3
Jessop, Dr. (Vision of), 322
Jodrell, Sir Neville, 332
Jones, Kennedy, 345
Jones of Pantglās, Mrs., 181–2

Kennedy, Vice-Admiral Sir W., 245
Keppel, Lady Anne (*see* Coke)
King, Mrs. Charles, 347–8
Klump's Hotel, 51
Knatchbull, Lady, 69
Knepp Castle, 131–2

Labrosse, Vicomtesse de, 133
Lamb, Lady Caroline, 124
Landor, W. Savage, 149
Lane, John, 258
Larkin, 166–9
Latham, Dr. Gordon, 29
Lea Castle, 290, 303, 307
Leeds, Lady, 259
Leighton, Lord, 117, 213, 222
Leith of Fyvie, Lord and Lady, 288
Leslie, C. R. (R.A.), 138–9
Lichnowsky, Count, 367
Lilford, Lady, 263
Limnerslease, 222–3
Litchfield, 230
Little, Mrs., 79, 88
Llandaff, Bishop of, 217
London, Bishop of, 355–6
Lothian, Lady, 272–3
Louis Philippe, 263
Louis XIII, 289
Loutitt, 26, 30
Luard, Mrs., Murder of, 253–4
Lucas, Horatio and Mrs., 231
Lucia, 234–5
Lytton, Bulwer, 69

Macaulay, Lord, 241, 262
Macdonald, Lord, 287
Macdonald, Sir Alexander and Lady, 287–8
Mackail, Mrs. Foreword, 212
Maclagan, Mrs., 328
Macquoid, Katherine, 226
Manning, Cardinal, 141
March, Mr. and Mrs. George, 326

Margherita, Queen, 152
Marling, Sir Percy, 355
Marryatt, Florence, 193
Martineau, Harriet, 260
Mary, Queen of Scots, 271
Massingberd, Mrs., 190–1
Mattei, Count, 154
Maurice, Mr., 160, 161, 162
Maurice, Frederick Denison, 162
McClintock, Lady, 339–40
McLelland, Lady, 317
Meath, Lord, 243
Millais, Sir J., 211, 221–2
Millais, Miss Mary, 221
Milner, Lady, 356
Mitchell, 266
Moncrieff, Blanche, 64
Monte Uto, Villa, 159
Moore, Albert, 227
Mordaunt, Lord, 282
Morgan, Pierpont, 286, 287
Morris, William, 212, 217, 218, 227
Morris, Mrs. William, 215
Mostyn, Lady, 59
Mulready, W., 227
Munro, Mr. and Mrs., 327–8
Mure, Arthur, 150, 359
Murphy, Sergt., 243
Murray, Lady Augusta, 264
Murray, Charles, 64
Murray, Daisy and Alice, 64, 123
Murray, the Misses (Florence), 146–7, 151
" Mustard Pot, The " (Turner), 138–9
Musurus Pasha and family, 65

Nagai, Madame, 366
Nakanomikado, Marquis, 365
Napoleon, 177, 256, 267, 382
Navarro, Madame (Mary Anderson), 117
Nicholson, Dr., 328
Noble, Mrs., 289
Nogi, General, 359
Norman, Dr. Philip, 340
Norreys, Rose, 184 *et seq.*
Northumberland, Louisa, Duchess of, 129
Northumberland, Eleanor, Duchess of, 129
Noyes, Mrs., 320
Nuti, Villa (Florence), 145 *et seq.*
" Nutty," the Hillington Ghost, 269–70

Ockenden, 131
O'Hara, General, 290
Opera in Florence, 152
Osborn, Canon, 125
Osborne, Lord Conyers, 312–3
Ouida, 149, 150–1
Overcourt, 275–6
Oxburgh, 271

Paget, Walburga Lady, 149
Palmerston, Lady, 134
Palmerston, Lord, 349
Park Place, Henley, 289
Parnell, Cissy, 58
Parr, Dr., 268
Paterson, Elizabeth, 260
Patterson, Helen, 228
Pember, Mr., M.P., 60, 161
Pember, Miss, 161
Percy, Bishop, 122
Pepys, Samuel, 284
Peterborough, Lord, 282
Petworth House, 131 *et seq.*
Phillott, Miss, 215
Phillott, Mrs., 227
Pickering, Betty (*see* Creed, Mrs.): grandfather, 19; grandmother, 20–1, 38, 120; mother, 14 *et seq.*, and Part I *passim*; Evelyn (*see* De Morgan, E.), Sir Gilbert, 49; Mrs. Henry, 326; Percival, (father) 18, 19, 70, 71; Rowland, 23, 36, 41, 120; Spencer, 23, 26, 46, 52–3, 120
Piozzi, Mrs., 294
Portal, Mrs. George, 313
Potter, Miss Jennie O'Neal, 177
Pre-Raphaelites, The, 143, 209 *et seq.*
Prinsep, Val, 217
Prinsep, Mrs. Thoby, 219, 220–1
Pulleine family, 238

Queen of Holland, 351
Queen Victoria (*see* Victoria, Queen)
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert, 219

Raffaello (cook), 234–5
Ralston, Mr., 326
Rasputin, 379
Regent, The Prince, 260
Richmond, Lady, 239
Richmond, Sir William, 117, 219, 234, 318–9
Roddam, Charlotte, 125
Rollitt, Sir Albert, 288
Rosebery, Lady, 62
Ross, Mrs. Janet, 149
Rossetti, Christiana, 216
Rossetti, William, 213–15
Ruskin, 161
Russell, George, 171
Rustem Bey, 65

St. Anne's Hill, 288
Salisbury, Lord, 237
Salisbury, Lady, 66
Salmon, Dr., 161
Salting, Mrs., 288
Salusbury, Dr., 221
Salvation Army, 144
Sandys, F. (R.A.), 227
Schlangenbad, 51
Scott, Dr., 349–50
Scott, Mr. and Mrs., 151–2
Scott, Sir Walter, 162
Seddon, John, 215 *et seq.*
Shah of Persia, 65
Shaw, Bernard, 187
Shaw, Mrs., of Havant, 137
Sherson, Erroll, Foreword, 150
Shirley, Sir Thomas, 139
Siddons, Mrs., 347
Sims, C. (R.A.), 210
Skilbeck, Mrs. Wray, 227
Smith, W. Reginald, 267
Solomon, Simeon, 231
Sotheby, Charles, 123
Sotheby, General, 124
" Souls, The," 178
Southwark, Bishop of, 355
Spencer-Stanhope, Lady E., 14–16, 20; John, 14, 83, 85, 106, 266; The Misses Frances and Maria, 75 *et seq.*; Montague, 106; General Philip, 22, 85, 129; Roddam, 104–112, 143 *et seq.*, 209, 214; Mrs. Roddam, 133, 143; Sir Walter, 94, 104–5; Walter, 100
Spencer, Earl, 123, 264
Spiritualism, 191 *et seq.*, 251, 253–4, 333
Stafford, Lord, 322
Stamford, Lord, 130
Stanhope, Lord, 199
Stanley, Lady (*née* Tennant), 210–1, 234
Stanley-Musgrave, Capt., 311
Steele, Dr., 149
Stephenson, Miss Bessie, 263
Stirling, Rev. Charles, 239–244
Stirling, Bishop, 239, 244 *et seq.*
Stirling, Mr., 233, 238 *et seq.*, 251–4, 287, 337–9
Stirling, Mrs. A. M. W.: Bryanston Square, stories of, 65; Banks Hall, life at, 73 *et seq.*; Child friends, 55–9; children's books, 100–1, 103; Cockney stories, 169, *et seq.*; De Morgan, William, first impressions of, 224; earliest recollections, 13 *et seq.*, 28 *et seq.*; Ecton, life at, 121 *et seq.*; father and mother, 14–15, 19, 257; first book published, 104; Florence, first visit to, 143 *et seq.*; Germany, early visit to, 51–2; governesses, 41–2; Holkham, first visit to, 254 *et seq.*; Japanese, views on, 359 *et seq.*; London holiday from Banks, 116–17; madman, adventure with, 337 *et seq.*; marriage, 250; organist in church, 110–1; playgoing experiences, 182–7; premonition of catastrophes, 70–1; presented at Court, 163–4; recipe for making a book, 258; spiritualistic séances, 191–4; verses, 23–5, 40, 43–5, 47, 50, 86, 102, 163; Watts, G. F., first impressions of, 220
Stirling family, 239 *et seq.*
Stopford-Sackville, Mr., 281–3
Storey, Capt. and Miss, 65
Strange, Colonel, 294
Strathmore, Lord and Lady, 326 *et seq.*
Strong, Mrs. Linwood, 58
Stufa, Marchese della, 151
Sturges, Mrs. and Miss, 127
Sulhamstead House, 189
Sussex, Duke of, 264
Swansfield House, 129
Swinburne, Algernon, 161–2

Tebbs, Mr. and Mrs. Virtue, 215–16
Teck, H.R.H. Duchess of, 63
Telepathy, Instances of, 319–20
Tennyson, 160–1, 343–4
Terry, Ellen, 184, 219, 220
Thompson, Hugh, 235
Thorpe Hall, 287
Thrale, Mrs. (*see* Piozzi)
Tichborne Claimant, 60–9
Tichmarsh, 49, 283
Tierra del Fuego, 244
Togo, Admiral, 359
Tokugawa, Mr., 359, 363–4
Tooth, Rev. Mr., 147
Tottenham, Rev. Mr. Loftus, 147
Townshend, Lady James, 312–13
Tracey, Lady, 310–11
" Tracks of a Rolling Stone," 269
Treadcroft, Miss, 141
Tree, Beerbohm, 186
Trevanion, Lady Frances, 327–8
Tryon, Admiral and Lady, 310–11
Turner, J. W. (artist), 138–9
Turner, Percy Vere, 20
Turner, Mrs., 19, 20
Turpin, Dick, 286

Ussher, Bishop, 282

Vallemer, Madame de, 141
Vernon, Mr., 155
Victoria, H.M. Queen, 196 *et seq.*
Victoria, Funeral of H.M. Queen, 200

Wachtheimer, Countess, 193
Waddup (" Waddy "), 18, 48, 50
War, Stories of the, 369 *et seq.*
" Waterloo," Anecdotes of, 241 *et seq.*
Waterpark, Lady, 62, 197, 198
Waterpark, Lady, daughter of, 62–3
Waters, Mr., 226
Watts, G. F., 219 *et seq.*
Watts, Mrs., 220–22, 234
Webb, Philip, 219
Wedgwood, Hensleigh, 230
Weldon, Mrs., 160
Wellington, Duke of, 85, 241 *et seq.*
Wellesley, Lady, 259
Wells, Peter, 151
Wentworth-Wodehouse, 285–6
West-end church, 130
Whistler, 209, 213
Whitbread, Samuel and Juliana, 264
Whiting, Dr., 161
Whittington Club, Whitechapel, 226
Wilbraham, Roger, 262
Wilde, Oscar, 187, 195–6, 213
Wilde, Mrs. Oscar, 194–5
Wilde, Sir W. and Lady, 195
Wilde, Willie, 195
Wilhelm, ex-Kaiser, 351, 382
William IV, 261
Williamson, Miss, 317–18
Winchester, Bishop of, 355
Wintour, Major, 314
Wisden, 139
Witham, Mrs., Strange experiences of, 303 *et seq.*
Wood, Charles, 48
Wright, butler, 89, 93
Wyndham-King, Mrs., 133–5

Y——, Strange story of Colonel, 311
" Yorkshire Natural," 109
Youssoupoff, Prince, 379

Printed by Butler & Tanner Ltd., *Frome and London*